

# OLD ORCHARD BEACH, ME.

## PLANNING STUDY OF A RESORT COMMUNITY



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OLD ORCHARD BEACH, MAINE :  
PLANNING STUDY OF A RESORT COMMUNITY

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### The Project

This report represents the end product of a four-week study done by graduate students from George Washington University's Department of Urban and Regional Planning. The project was suggested by Professor Fred Amling, Department of Business Administration, home owner and summer resident of the Old Orchard Beach, Maine community of Ocean Park. Professor Amling suggested that Old Orchard Beach would make an excellent subject for Professor Sherwin Greene's Community Preservation and Design course because of its special problems resulting from large summer influxes of tourists. At Professor Amling's invitation, Professor Greene and eight students spent three weeks in Maine working on the initial study and two weeks in Washington, D.C. finishing the graphics and the text.

### The Problem

Old Orchard Beach, a popular resort since the 19th century, is visited annually by tourists (many from Canada) who are attracted to the town's beautiful beach. Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, the town's population swells from its winter level of 6,000 to its July 4th peak of 100,000. This population increase results in a variety of problems for the town, including traffic congestion; large crowds on the beach and in the central business district; and heavy demands on public facilities and services. Year-round residents must support, through their taxes, public facilities with enough excess capacity to accommodate the tourists. Gradually the town's image has deteriorated since its Victorian heyday, although it was still a popular family resort in the 1940's. Now the town has a reputation for being a "honky tonk" resort, offering amusement parks, video games, and fast food instead of gracious hotels, an elegant Casino, and dancing to the music of the Big Bands.

In spite of the impact, the community continues to encourage tourism because it is the town's only industry. Many businessmen come from out-of-town, earn large profits, and leave town with their money at the end of the season. Year-round residents are forced to support themselves on what they can earn during those hectic three months, or on jobs in other communities. The town's median income is significantly lower than that of York County, and a higher percentage of the town's population lives below the poverty level than in the country as a whole. Because of OOB's dependencies on a seasonal economy, it doesn't offer its year-round residents the quality of life available in neighboring communities with more diversified economies.

Many town officials and citizens are concerned about the town's future, especially since the recent recession has made the monetary exchange rate unfavorable for Canadian tourists. Town officials are welcoming



new types of development, including the first condominiums and a Triple-A baseball stadium. The town has also created its first light industrial zoning district in an attempt to attract year-round businesses. Old Orchard Beach has many assets it can capitalize on, including its beautiful beach and natural setting; unique historic neighborhoods; and a proud past as one of the Northeast's finest resorts. The community is already taking steps to address its problems of image and quality of life. It is the purpose of this report to make proposals that could assist in achieving these goals.

### The Approach

The George Washington University Study Team approached the project without preconceived ideas of the specific issues they would address or proposals they would make. The project was divided into three phases: research, analysis of alternatives, and report production. For the first phase, the study team divided the research tasks to cover every aspect of the community: its regional context, history, demographics, economic base, land use, natural setting, and visual quality. Each research team spent about a week exploring the area, gathering information from interviews, reports, and windshield surveys. Each team then presented the whole group with a report of its findings, supported with appropriate maps, tables, and photographs. The group then started the second phase of the project by synthesizing their findings into lists of problems and potentials. Goals were established and objectives chosen to achieve them. Then each team member developed alternative proposals for solving the town's key problems. Finally, the Study Team as a whole weighed each alternative, discarded some, and consolidated the final ideas into one proposal for the whole town and another for the central business district.

### The Proposals

The Study Team has made two proposals, one for Old Orchard Beach as a whole, and one for the Central Business District.

The General Old Orchard Beach proposal focuses on the following recommendations:

- \* Integration of development in the industrial district to create a year-round recreational and cultural center
- \* Improvement of traffic circulation through the construction of an access road across the top of the industrial district, linking Saco and Cascade Roads
- \* Provision of central parking facilities in the industrial district with an express bus to the beach, to intercept tourist vehicles and relieve downtown congestion

- \* Improvement of neighborhood shopping areas to provide better year-round facilities and to create neighborhood focal points
- \* Creation of wetlands wildlife preserves with nature trails and interpretive centers in the natural areas on the northern and southern edges of town
- \* Construction of bicycle and hiking trails linking the the two wildlife preserves along the existing Boston and Maine railroad right-of-way
- \* Designation of the Ocean Park Baptist Community and the Salvation Army Campground as Historic Districts and creation of historic-site walking tours.

The proposals for the Central Business District focus on the area adjacent to Old Orchard Street, south on West Grand to Heath Street and north on East Grand to Foote Street. The main recommendations are:

#### Development Patterns:

- \* Creation of a pedestrian mall at the bottom of Old Orchard Street (between the railroad tracks and the beach) to be the focus of activity at new restaurants, shops, and a music pavillion
- \* Relocation of the amusement park to between Heath and Staples Streets-the site currently occupied by a municipal parking lot and park
- \* Municipal ownership of the key real estate immediately adjacent to the pedestrian mall-to be leased for profit to shops and restaurants
- \* Private sector development of the beach-front sites - for boardwalk shops and restaurants
- \* Private-sector development of the beach-front sites adjacent to the above retail area - for hotels and condominiums

#### Circulation and Parking:

- \* Implementation of a seasonal one-way traffic circulation system that channels autos down Old Orchard Street and off onto Milliken and First Streets to East and West Grand across the tracks via new access points
- \* Construction of three municipal parking garages: one adjacent to the new amusement park; one at the current site at Milliken and Foote Streets; and one on East Grand at Little River Road

- \* Provision of shuttle buses connecting the parking garages with city-wide recreation facilities
- \* Narrowing Old Orchard Street through widening the sidewalks and enhancing the landscaping, while allowing limited short-term parking in parking bays
- \* Channeling all delivery trucks to access ways behind Old Orchard Street

#### Improvement of Visual Quality and Image:

- \* Development of guidelines for design of signs, street furniture, landscaping
- \* Enforcement of existing regulations
- \* Enactment of design regulations for building height and setbacks, according to a Central Business District Plan

#### Staging and Implementation

The Study Team recommends that the proposals be implemented in three stages. The first would be the public sector initiatives to create the pedestrian mall and formulate building guidelines for redevelopment of Old Orchard Street. The role of the private sector would be secondary in this stage; however, in the second and third stages, the roles would be reversed. Initiative and capital for redeveloping the rest of downtown would come from the private sector, with the municipality assisting mainly in the assembling of property and the closing of streets.

Through such an approach, the image and quality of life of Old Orchard Beach could be substantially improved. The initial investment of municipal time and money could yield a higher return in terms of tax revenues, property values, and income from municipal properties. The study team feels it is essential for the town to indicate its intent and commitment by taking the initiative now to begin the process of change. Only through such decisive action can Old Orchard Beach re-establish its historic image as the northeast's finest resort town.

### Acknowledgments

Professor Greene and Study Team are particularly grateful to Professor and Mrs. Fred Amling, who first proposed that a project of this kind might be done, and then offered the use of their Ocean Park home. We would also like to thank all our neighbors in Ocean Park for the friendly welcome into their community.

We would especially like to thank Jerome Plante, Town Manager, and Edward Beaudoin, Town Planner, whose assistance and support made this report possible. Other local officials, as well as businessmen and citizens, who were generous with their time and knowledge are:

Randall Arandt, Senior Planner, Southern Maine Regional  
Planning Commission

C. Jackson Barstow, Member of the Planning Board, Old Orchard  
Beach

Lawrence Bernard, Superintendent of Schools

Alan Burnham, Operator, O.O.B. Sewage Treatment Facility

Bernard W. Emery, Assessor, Old Orchard Beach

June Emery, President, Old Orchard Beach Historical Society

Judith George, Secretary to the Town Council, Old Orchard Beach

Janice Macleod, Court and Records Officer, O.O.B., Police  
Department

Maureen O'Leary, Town Clerk, Old Orchard Beach

Katherine M. Poulin, Assessor's Clerk, Old Orchard Beach

Janet Shea, Administrative Assistant, Boston and Maine Railroad

Thomas Smith, Chief, Fire Department

Harry M. Wooster, President, Treasurer and Engineer, Biddeford-  
Saco Water Company

Betty York, resident of Ocean Park

## I. INTRODUCTION

### The Study Team

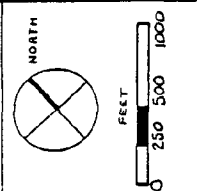
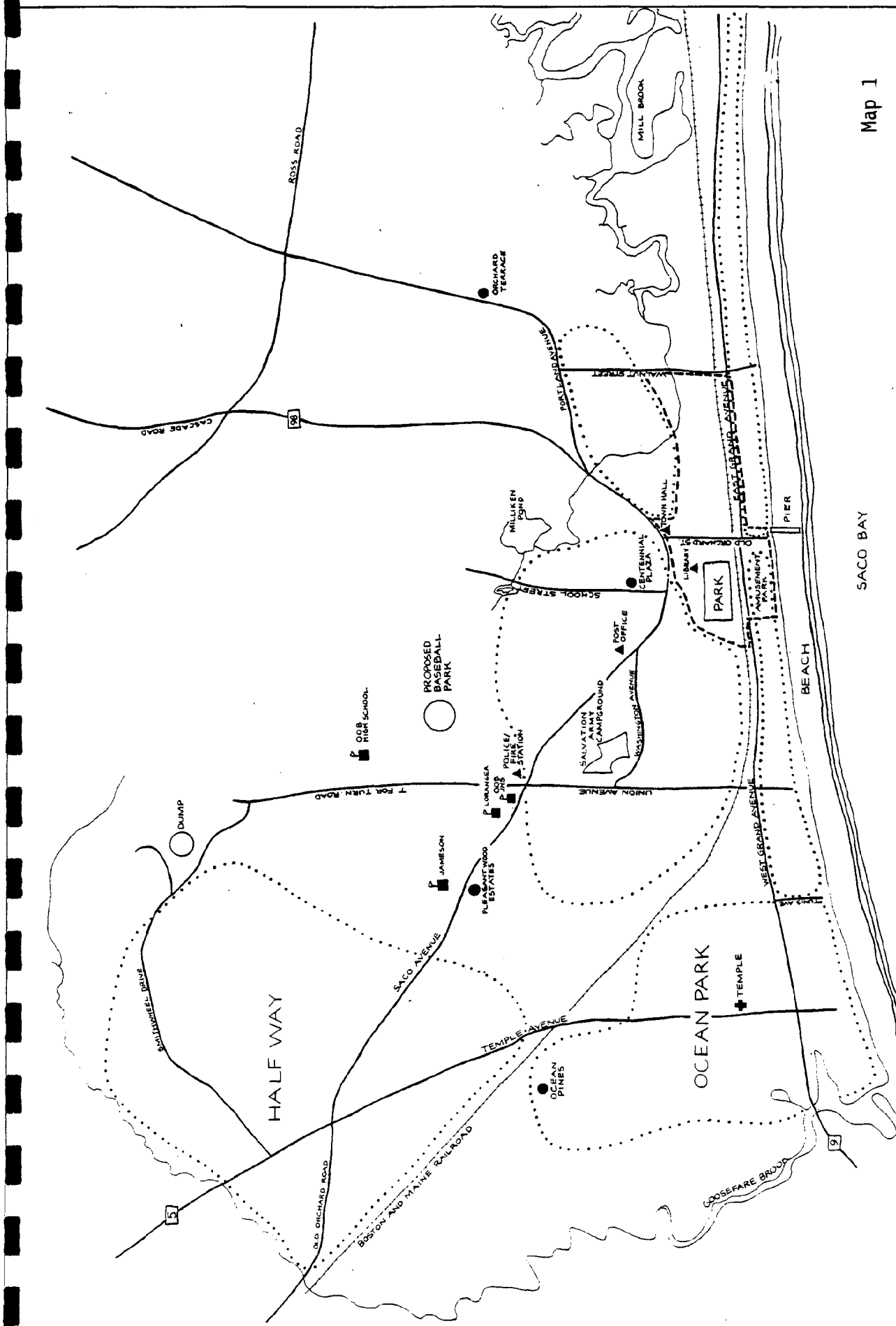
This report was prepared by graduate students from the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. All the students were in the second year of this 2½-year professional degree program. Each student approached the project from a slightly different perspective, depending on his or her individual background and interests. Several students, whose concentration is in community design, wished to address the issue of visual quality in OOB using their design training, as well as their drawing and photography skills. Others, with background in Historic Preservation, wanted to identify the historical and architectural resources of the community. Some students were interested in exploring the town's potential for economic development and others were interested in the special environmental problems of a beach community. Together the students formed a study team under the direction of Professor Sherwin Greene.

### The Project (See Map 1)

The original idea for the project came from Professor Fred Amling, Professor of Business Administration. A home owner and summer resident of the Old Orchard Beach community of Ocean Park, Professor Amling has long been aware of the special problems of this resort community. He suggested to Professor Greene that a study of OOB would be an excellent field project because the community's summer season, during which the town's population grows from 6,000 year-round residents up to 100,000 tourists on peak days, offers dramatic planning problems. Professor Amling offered Professor Greene and his students the use of his home in Ocean Park to permit an on-site study of OOB. This generous offer was gratefully accepted and the study team spent from May 16 to June 6, 1983 in Maine. The final report was completed in Washington, D.C. where the necessary drafting and text production facilities were available.

### The Project Structure

The study team approached the project without preconceived ideas of the specific issues they would address or proposals they would make. The project was divided into three phases: research, analysis of alternatives; and production of the text and graphics. For the first phase, the Research Coordinator distributed assignments that covered every aspect of the community: its regional context, history, demographics, economic base, land use, natural setting, and visual quality. Each research team spent about a week exploring the area in order to become familiar with OOB and its neighboring communities. At the same time, some teams gathered information pertaining to their research from the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission and from local government offices. The SMRPC also supplied



- LEGEND**
- ..... RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD
  - CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
  - ELDERLY HOUSING
  - ▲ PUBLIC FACILITY

# LOCATION MAP

PLANNING STUDY  
OF A  
RESORT COMMUNITY  
GEORGE WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY  
DEPT OF U-RP  
JUNE 1983

**OLD  
ORCHARD  
BEACH, ME.**

all the previous research reports which included OOB within the regional planning context.

The History research team gathered information from local officials, as well as citizens, and combed the files of the Historical Society. A large number of primary sources were found, including old newspapers, pamphlets, and books about OOB. The information has been synthesized into Chapter III, which is also accompanied with a map of historic sites and photos of the town in years gone by.

The Population and Economics team compiled both regional and local statistics on employment, income, tax revenues, town budgets, population growth, poverty status, and industrial development. After discussing the town's current economic situation with town officials, business men, and developers, the team compiled their report, presented in Chapter IV and Technical Appendix A.

The Environmental team brought together all the previous studies of critical environmental issues that affect OOB, particularly with regard to the town's shoreland and wetlands. Information was gathered on the town's environmental problems, such as areas with undevelopable soils; areas with high water tables or flood plains; and areas that deserved protection from development. A summary report on the existing natural setting is included in Chapter V, but the main report is contained in Technical Appendix D.

Meanwhile, the research teams studying the existing land use of OOB did a thorough windshield survey of the town by driving down every road and mapping each kind of use, be it residential, commercial, recreational, or institutional. This last category covered public facilities such as the schools, police and fire stations, library, post-office, etc. It also covered private facilities such as churches, private schools, and recreational facilities. A further public facilities study was made to determine the current capacity of each system (sewers, water, police, fire, etc.) and the capability of each system to accommodate the pressures of increased summer population. Local officials were consulted about each of these areas and the findings are reported in Chapter V.

The Visual Analysis team conducted both windshield surveys of the town as a whole and walking surveys of the Central Business District (CBD). The team analyzed the qualities that give the community its identity and visual impact, such as patterns of building mass and open space; entrances and barriers; pedestrian paths and vehicular routes (and points of conflict); and the key focal points for tourist and resident activities. The team's evaluation is contained in Chapter VI.

#### Analysis of Alternatives

When all the research was completed, the individual teams reported their findings to the group as a whole. The group then synthesized the key findings into a list of problems and potentials. Next, in

order to guide the proposal making process, the study team established goals and developed objectives by which to achieve them. Finally the study team combined each research team's list of general recommendations into a master list of recommendations. All of these are contained in Chapter VII.

The study team then broke up to work individually to devise alternative approaches to solving the problems that the group had identified. Every attempt was made to build on existing potentials and to plan for both the town as a whole and for the CBD. After wrestling with alternative concepts individually, the team re-grouped and spent several long sessions trying to decide among alternatives. The last step in the process was to choose the concept upon which to focus and then to consolidate them into two concept plans, one for OOB as a whole, and one for the CBD. (The latter was further refined in an Illustrative Site Plan -- see Chapter VIII.)

The study team did not attempt to solve every problem and address every issue in OOB. There were many studies that needed to be made that were beyond the scope of this project. For instance, it was felt that perhaps the single most important study that the town could commission would be a market analysis of the community's potential for year-round light industrial and commercial development. It would be very useful to know what types of industry and retail business to target for intensive marketing. With this information, town officials would be in a good position to mount a strong economic development campaign. The study team also felt that an "environmental suitability" map should be developed, combining the already existing environmental information on soils, slope, geology, hydrology, and vegetation. Such a map would reveal what land is developable and for what kinds of development, after all the land with environmental constraints has been eliminated. Such knowledge would be very important for planning the future growth of OOB's residential and light industrial districts. The study team found that there was a need for many such fascinating and useful studies, but time limits made it impossible to pursue them.

#### Production of Text and Graphics

The third and last phase of the project was the production of the text and the graphics to support it. The study team again divided the tasks among themselves. While one group edited the research reports and wrote final chapters, the other group drew maps, designed tables, and chose photographs to illustrate key points. The entire effort has been completed in a little over four weeks. The team celebrated with a feast of soft-shell crabs (after an in-depth study revealed that Maine lobster costs \$10.00 per pound in Washington).



## II. REGIONAL CONTEXT

### Linkages

Old Orchard Beach is situated in the southeast corner of York County, the southernmost county in Maine (see Figure 1). The township comprises about five thousand acres, and contains almost three of the State's twenty miles of sand beach. The Saco Bay shore, as a whole, has about seven miles of sand beach. The beach, the most readily accessible on the Atlantic from major Canadian cities such as Montreal and Quebec, has made Old Orchard Beach one of the most popular tourist resorts on the Maine Coast. New York is about 265 miles; Boston, about 75 miles; Portland, about 15 miles; and Montreal and Quebec are within 300 miles.

Access to the town is, now, exclusively by road. Until the mid-seventies, passenger service was provided by the Boston and Maine Railroad whose track still runs through the town. Now, visitors arrive by car via either I-95 or along U.S. Route 1. A new spur road, I-195, now provides exits and access connecting the Maine Turnpike directly with Old Orchard Beach. These highways both run in a roughly southwest to northeast direction along the state's coastal strip, providing rapid access from both the town and from the rest of the county to industrial areas in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and Portland, Maine. A system of state and rural roads connects the town to other areas of the county and state, to the neighboring state of New Hampshire, and to the Canadian provinces. Airports serving Old Orchard Beach are, for passengers, Portland and, to a lesser extent, Boston. In addition, South Sanford, Biddeford, and Kennebunk can provide limited, non-commercial access.

Rail passenger service is no longer available and it is unlikely to be renewed in the foreseeable future. Only one of the three railroads which served the county previously is still in operation. The B & M is now exclusively used for freight.

### Population

The southern Maine area in general, and York County in particular, have experienced a rapid population increase in recent years. Since 1970, the County's population has increased equal to adding the average population of an entire township each year. Old Orchard Beach has absorbed some of this growth, but its population has not grown as rapidly as that of the county generally. Randall Arandt, Senior Planner for the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission, attributes much of the growth to in-migration, particularly of elderly, retired people. Traditionally, the area has had large numbers of second homes, and it seems probable that many people are choosing to occupy them for longer periods, if not year-round. In addition, as housing for the elderly becomes available, young families with children are making first-home purchases of residences previously occupied by the elderly (according to the School Superintendent in Old Orchard Beach).

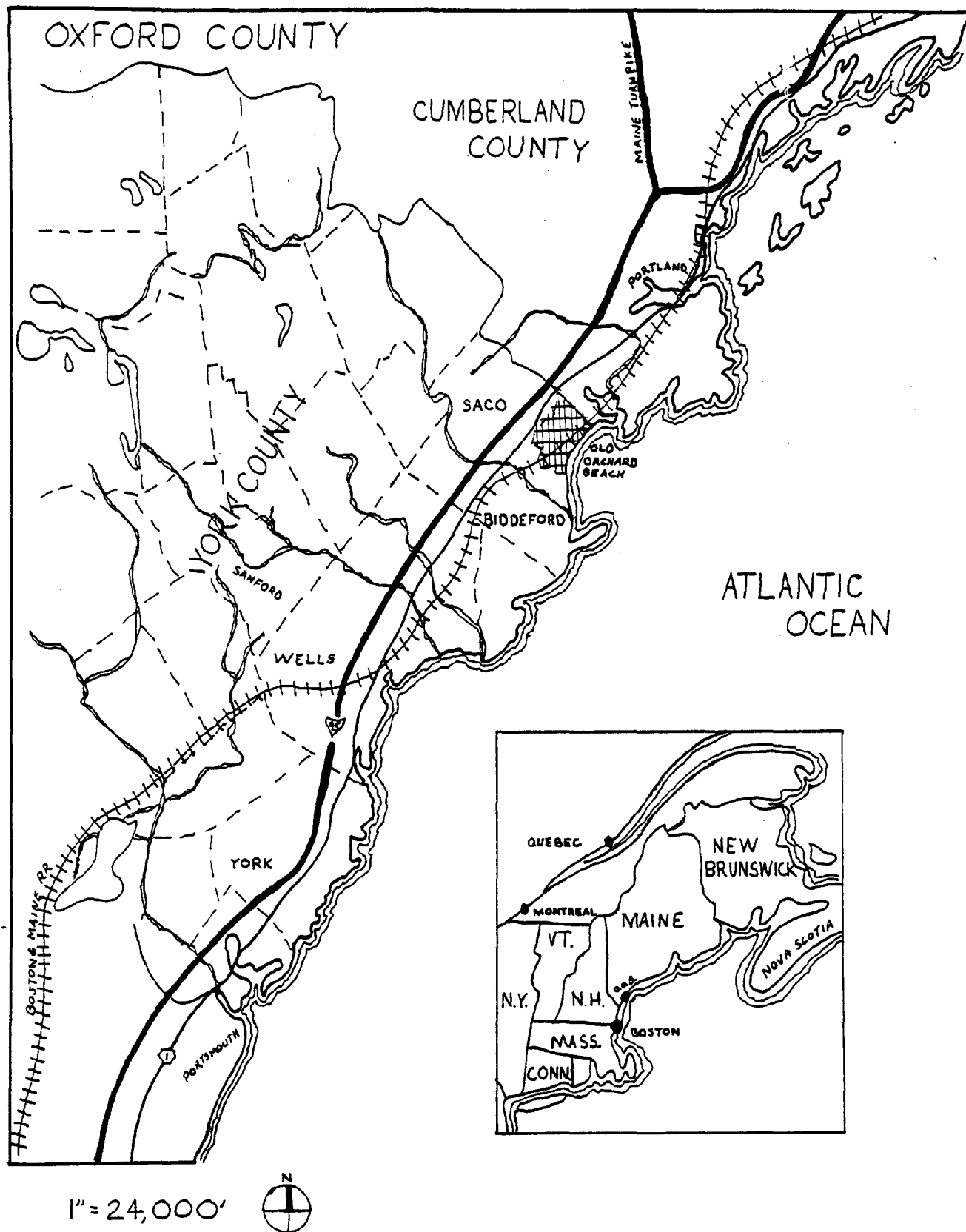


Figure 1  
Regional Context

Besides the year-round population, there is also an enormous seasonal influx of tourists. From June through August, the population of York County almost doubles. York, Wells, and Old Orchard Beach in particular experience enormous degrees of seasonal variation. Southern Maine, with its many lakes and forests, has long had an attraction for vacationers, and Old Orchard Beach has been one of the centers for tourism. Residents and town officials estimate that the population increases tenfold or more during the summer months. Together, Wells, York, and Old Orchard Beach account for 56% of the approximately 125,000 visitors to the area.

### Industries

Old Orchard Beach relies more heavily on the seasonal influx of people and business to support its economy than does the rest of the County. Elsewhere in the County there are sawmills and tanneries; agricultural activity (dairying, poultry and eggs, fruit farming, etc.); fishing and shellfishing; and manufacturing industries. These industries include a large printing facility at Wells, the Naval Shipyard at Kittery (which provides employment for a number of Old Orchard Beach residents), an airplane engine component plant at York, and textile and leather goods industries in other parts of the county.

### Employment

As might be expected in a State where tourism is a major industry, State and York County employment figures vary widely between winter and summer. The State labor force participation rate is 10.9% higher in August than it is in February, and seasonal variation for the towns of York and Wells is 59.5% and 50.4% respectively. The dollar value of taxable sales and the number of establishments also reflects a wide seasonal variation. The number of establishments reporting taxable sales in February 1977 in York County was 1607, as compared with 3163 in August of that year, a ratio of almost 2 to 1. The ratio of taxable summer sales to winter sales was 32 to 1. Ratios of taxable sales in Wells and York were 13.9 to 1 and 5.8 to 1 respectively. County sales per capita varied between \$93.32 in February, and \$302.40 in August. In Wells the figures were \$83.40 and \$1,162.76 and, for York, \$77.30 and \$450.95. In the County, state valuation per capita increased by 135% between 1970 and 1980, and by 95.5% in Wells and 81.9% in York. Comparable figures for Old Orchard Beach can be found in Appendix A.

### Roads

Of the approximately 1944 miles of roadway (as of 1974) in York County, about 277 miles are State Highway, and an additional 667 are state aided. This means that responsibility for maintaining just over 50% of the roads is the exclusive responsibility of the individual municipalities

in which those roads are situated. The effect of this is to spread the costs of maintaining Town Ways only among the residents of that town. This policy creates a wide disparity between the costs of constructing and maintaining the roads from one town to another. This situation is heightened by the varying impact of the tourist trade. Old Orchard Beach, for example, must distribute the costs for maintaining roads among its 6275 people, despite the fact that the roads within the Urban Line carry enormous amounts of seasonal traffic. Without funds from state and federal revenue sharing, the costs of maintaining these Town Ways would be prohibitive, and could, at least in part, account for the town's poor road conditions.

### Tourist Attractions

Throughout the county, townships have taken considerable initiative in providing tourist attractions. Both York and Wells have pursued an active policy of acquiring land which not only provides access to the beaches, but also provides inland recreation facilities, wildlife preserves, tennis, hiking and other activities for residents and tourists alike. In Wells, much of the land acquired for recreation between 1970 and 1980 has not yet been improved, but it is protected from subdivision development. In addition, the township has acquired twenty acres in the Center Harbor, including a pier and beachfront property. Development of this property is thought to be key to waterfront tourism, and to the town's image.

Acquisition of public lands on a similar scale has occurred in York. Since 1970, part of Mt. Agamenticus, (a coastal wildlife sanctuary) and parcels along water courses, as well as recreational lands in built-up areas, have been purchased. Public holdings have increased tenfold in the past decade, while the built-up portion of the County has doubled in size. York township has not been as active as Wells or OOB in acquiring beachfront property. However, York township has undertaken improvements on property it already owns, including provision of parking and of public sanitary facilities.

Besides acquisition of public open space which provides a variety of recreational experiences, several towns in York County have undertaken the preservation of historic buildings and districts. The County has published a Model Historic District Ordinance which has been adopted by both York and Wells, as well as by other towns such as South Berwick and Sanford (which rely less heavily on tourism). Although Old Orchard Beach does not have the large number of historic structures found in York or Kennebunkport, it does have districts which might qualify for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Sites, and a few individual buildings. (For a further discussion of Old Orchard Beach's historic resources see Chapter III.)

### III. HISTORY OF OLD ORCHARD BEACH

#### The Town

The name Old Orchard Beach comes from the first apple orchard in the colonies which was planted here in 1636. Known as "Old Orchard", it was a landmark to sailors. The area was settled in the 1620's and much of the land was used for working farms and cow pastures. At the time that Maine became a state in 1820, the first inn in OOB opened on Saco Avenue. The beach attracted visitors as early as 1837 when E.C. Staples began taking summer boarders at his farm. Convinced that OOB could become a summer resort, he built the first Old Orchard House in 1840.

The railroad played an important role in OOB's development by enabling New England residents to visit the Maine shore. The Portland to Boston line was built in 1842 and in 1853 extended to Montreal, thereby opening the way for Canadian tourists to come to OOB.

Following the Civil War, OOB expanded rapidly as many new hotels, stores and homes were built. The Boston and Maine railroad was built in 1873, bringing passengers directly into the beach area. The hotels were large and elegant and the beach was well populated by bathers and horseback riders. Many of the hotels of this era were destroyed by fires, but newer and larger ones replaced them. The largest and most prominent of these was the Old Orchard House, built in 1876 (See photos and section of Old Orchard Herald at the end of this chapter). It had 300 rooms surrounded by expansive and elegant lawns and stood at the top of Old Orchard Street.

Another aspect of Old Orchard Beach's role as a resort community was introduced at this time when a Methodist group formed the Old Orchard Campground Association in 1873. They built campgrounds and the Tabernacle in the area between Saco and Washington Avenues. This development brought thousands of visitors to the Methodist and Christian Missionary Alliance meetings. In 1881, the Ocean Park Association was founded by a Baptist group which brought in more visitors for weekly meetings during the summer. They built "The Temple" for speakers and meetings, and the building remains as one of the most significant structures in OOB.

In 1883, Old Orchard became a Town when it separated from Saco, and more new building continued. A harness racing track opened in 1892 and the first merry-go-round in the United States opened in Old Orchard Beach.

The highlight of Old Orchard's development as an amusement area was the building of the steel ocean pier in 1898. It was nearly 1,800 feet long and 20 feet above the tides. It was built for \$38,100 by Herbert Hildreth who owned the bathing pavilion at that site. In 1899 he purchased a hotel which he moved to the pier entrance site and named the Velvet Hotel. It was one of the most elegant hotels of its time and

featured velvet carpet in every room, electric lights, an elevator and a grand ballroom. There were 225 rooms on five stories and rooms were advertised in 1900 for \$1.50 to \$5.00 a day.

This was the "plush and velvet" age of OOB, when the arrival of summer visitors was noted in the local paper and the town could boast that a great many celebrated and prominent people were among them. The paper described the bathers on the beach as having "a perfectly elegant time."<sup>1</sup>

Guests at the many grand hotels found "a multitude of diversions and amusements", including full dress hops, progressive whist parties, concerts at St. Margaret's Church, music at the hotel music halls and the Casino on the pier. "A very lively week" was described by the Mirror to include all these activities as well as a "duck" party at the Old Orchard House where couples clad in white duck and outing costumes created a "summeresque atmosphere".

Those who visited Old Orchard considered it a progressive town. Although the resident population was less than 1,000, the town provided many "modern conveniences of a metropolitan character." Visitors appreciated the "extraordinary advancement" of the town expressed by the construction of the Town Hall in 1900. Electric trolleys provided local transportation to Biddeford and Saco and extensive passenger rail service made the beach area readily accessible. In 1905 OOB was considered to be at the height of its victorian splendor. (See photo).

On August 15, 1907, curtains at the Velvet Hotel caught fire when a woman was curling her hair. The fire destroyed the Velvet in less than 18 minutes and spread along the beachfront destroying the buildings east and west of the pier from Staples to Brisson Streets. The area was rebuilt immediately, but the large hotels were replaced by smaller hotels, rooming houses and cottages. A storm in 1909 destroyed a section of the pier and it was shortened to 800 feet and the Casino rebuilt.

The character of the beach changed also with the introduction of automobiles on the beach. In 1910 automobile racing was introduced on the beach and attracted large crowds. Stores, restaurants and souvenir shops sprang up on the main streets of town. In 1914 the first roller coaster in Old Orchard was built on the corner of Old Orchard Street and the beach.

After World War I, the amusement and tourist activities expanded (See photo). In the 1920's visitors were drawn by the motion picture theaters, merry-go-round, roller-coaster, bowling alleys, ferris wheel, dancing, moonlight sails on the bay and airplane rides that Old Orchard Beach offered. The beach provided a natural runway (when the tide was out) and many fliers

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<sup>1</sup>The Mirror, August 18, 1900.

used it for take-offs and landings. Charles Lindbergh brought fame to Old Orchard in 1927 when he landed the Spirit of St. Louis on the beach (see photo). During this period, many famous aviators gathered at OOB and aviation meets were held on the beach.

This was also the beginning of the Big Band era, and all the famous dance bands including Guy Lombardo, Duke Ellington and Count Basie played at the Pier Casino each summer while thousands danced under a crystal ball. Marathon dances were the rage in the early 30's. Accompanying the rise in popularity of Old Orchard during this time were problems of dealing with the crowds. The town newspaper in 1938 described the rise in public drunkenness and it seemed that the "plush and velvet" age was long forgotten.

After World War II, a growing population and increased mobility brought more tourists to the beach and the introduction of motels to the beachfront, further changing the character of the town. Signs of Old Orchard's past began to disappear. The Old Orchard House was razed in 1943. The roller coaster and amusement area burned down in 1948, and the race-track closed in 1953. Passenger service into OOB ended when the train station was demolished in 1963. Fire destroyed the entrance to the pier in 1969 and a major storm in 1978 destroyed the remains of the pier and damaged the beachfront.

Rebuilding continued as necessary to accommodate the constant flow of summer visitors. Cathy Duffy Petit, whose grandfather developed the pier, built a new 475 foot pier in 1980. Its design retains the towers at the entrance reminiscent of the original pier and provides shopping and amusement activities similar to those enjoyed when the Casino was popular.

### Historic Buildings

The Temple, built by the Baptist Association in the late 19th century to accommodate worship services and assembly programs, was the first building in OOB to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is noted for its unusual architectural design, particularly its octagonal shape which appeared occasionally in the architecture of this era.

Many other buildings in OOB are significant historically or architecturally but are not on the Register (see Map 2 and Table 1 at the end of this chapter). The Tabernacle and campgrounds, which were built in 1873 and acquired by the Salvation Army in 1952, are significant as a unique religious development. Because of this significance, the area could be designated as a historic district to preserve its unique character.

## Conclusions

Although OOB's role as a resort community has remained throughout its history, its character has changed with the times and as resort activities have changed. Once a quiet, elegant summer home, OOB is now characterized by "frantic indulgence into cheap experiences".<sup>2</sup> The transformation began when the grand old hotels were replaced by smaller ones which catered to short-term visitors and tourists from Canada. Newer building has lost the unified, quiet character and replaced it with small amusement activities.

The historic background of OOB could be used to enhance its attraction as a tourist community. The downtown area could try to re-create some of the resort atmosphere of the "plush and velvet" age. Visitors could be encouraged to stroll along the beachfront and enjoy outdoor activities and colorful sights. Air shows could be sponsored to draw on the aviation history of OOB, or trolley cars could provide transportation reminiscent of the early days in OOB. Relating future development to the history of OOB could help create a sense of pride and identity for the residents of the town.

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<sup>2</sup>Comprehensive Development Plan for Old Orchard Beach, Maine, 1962.



# OLD ORCHARD HERALD

VOL. I, No. 8.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 1899.

PRICE 5 CENTS.

*Going to Play Golf? Owen, Moore & Co., have the Clubs. Go to Portland or telegraph or telephone or better still send a letter.*

## THE MANY SIDES OF OLD ORCHARD LIFE.

THE mention of Old Orchard brings to different people as many different mental pictures. To one person Old Orchard suggests a long, sandy beach, one of the longest in the world, stretching for many miles beside the bay,—smooth, hard and delightful for driving, riding or wheeling. To another, perhaps, it suggests a place where surf bathing is simply perfect, and the picture in the mind is the grouping of merry bathers as they gather on the beach, their costumes making bright touches of color, while out beyond the surf are seen athletic young women, in appropriate water gowns, swimming lazily through the buoyant waves with their gallant escorts.

Another thinks first of the Old Orchard pier, which stretches for a third of a mile into the sea, and he remembers the peculiar sensation that came to him when he realized he had stepped off the continent for awhile. To another mind Old Orchard suggests a crowd, a cosmopolitan crowd, where varied elements commingle to make a most interesting study. Some there are in the crowd who have known the place almost from its beginning and for them it has many pleasant associations. They have made friends here, they have made money here, they have found happiness here, perhaps more than anywhere else, and they are loyal to their summer home in word and in deed. They know the attractions of the place, the rest which its hotels afford and the amusements which they yearly plan for their guests, and knowing thoroughly they enjoy thoroughly.

Others there are in the picture who only come to the shore for a single day and they scurry hither and yon to get all the pleasure possible from their too brief holiday, and their various ideas of enjoyment are amusing to the habitue.

But, attractive as is the beach with its rapidly changing pictures; the pier with its music and its dancing; the hotels with their luxuries of fitment and cuisine, there is yet another side of life here which is to many people the first picture that comes with the

mention of Old Orchard—its camp ground and its summer camp meetings. In fine weather the meetings are held out of doors in the vast auditorium so perfectly planned by nature. Seats for 4,500 people have been built in this natural amphitheatre, and birds flitting from tree to tree among the tall pines that give shade and shelter mingle their songs with the hymns of praise that go up from the congregations assembled there. The ground slopes gradually so that every seat gives a good view of the speakers' stand, from which great men have addressed great audiences in the years since its erection. There have been held immense political meetings with politicians of world-wide fame among the speech-makers; there have been held meetings where the temperance question has been forcefully presented by eminent men and women; there the Salvation Army has held annual meetings for many years, formerly with Balington Booth and his talented wife in command, and their bands of music and their peculiar methods have called together all sorts and conditions of men; there crowds have gathered on much-heralded Sundays and have helped make a very dramatic scene when fabulous sums of money have been raised through the magnetic influence of some talented speaker; and there many who "came to scoff remained to pray." The auditorium is shut in from the world outside by steep hills, dotted with tiny cottages, and here and there a white tent, owned by some church in the association, whose members occupy it in turn, or combine in one large family for days or weeks. Some of the avenues leading from the ground bear such names as Wesley, Zion and others connected with religion, and some are called Maplewood, Oakland, Fern, and similar names appropriate to the localities.

Originally all the land from Union avenue to the Saco road and across to the railroad tracks was owned by the Campmeeting Association, but practically all the building lots have been sold, so that, except for

[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE.]

## OLD ORCHARD HERALD.

## OLD ORCHARD HERALD

Issued every Wednesday and Saturday  
during the season.

HENRY D. WASHBURN, PUBLISHER.

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copies 5 cents.

For sale at all news stands, by news boys and at  
office of publication.

Address all communications to THE HERALD,  
Box 366, Old Orchard, Maine.

## TIDE TABLE.

Time of High Water at Old Orchard.

July			August.		
Day of Month	Morning	Evening	Day of Month	Morning	Evening
1	5 28	5 58	1	7 6	7 37
2	6 28	6 59	2	8 7	8 35
3	7 29	7 59	3	9 2	9 27
4	8 28	8 56	4	9 51	10 14
5	9 23	9 49	5	10 35	10 55
6	10 14	10 38	6	11 13	11 31
7	10 59	11 20	7	11 48	
8	11 40		8	0 6	0 24
9		0 19	9	0 42	0 59
10	0 37	0 56	10	1 17	1 35
11	1 15	1 34	11	1 53	2 12
12	1 52	2 10	12	2 32	2 53
13	2 28	2 47	13	3 15	3 39
14	3 6	3 27	14	4 5	4 33
15	3 48	4 11	15	5 4	5 38
16	4 36	5 4	16	6 13	6 49
17	5 33	6 4	17	7 24	7 59
18	6 37	7 10	18	8 34	9 6
19	7 43	8 17	19	9 36	10 5
20	8 50	9 22	20	10 33	10 57
21	9 52	10 21	21	11 20	11 43
22	10 50	11 16	22		0 6
23	11 41		23	0 29	0 52
24	0 5	0 29	24	1 13	1 36
25	0 53	1 16	25	1 59	2 23
26	1 39	2 2	26	2 47	3 12
27	2 25	2 48	27	3 38	4 6
28	3 12	3 37	28	4 36	5 7
29	4 4	4 32	29	5 38	6 9
30	5 2	5 32	30	6 40	7 11
31	6 3	6 35	31	7 40	8 7

THESE are truly perfect days for vacationists and pleasure seekers, and the heavily laden trains tell the story of thousands taking advantage of the delightful weather. Golf, bathing, rowing, driving, wheeling and sailing are now being enjoyed to their fullest extent all along the coast. What has proven somewhat discouraging weather for the farmers, on account of the drought, is proving a boon to the hotel men. That Maine will get ten million dollars out of the summer resort business this year there is no doubt. And speaking of Maine's resources, someone has said that they take care of them-

selves splendidly. And this seems to be a fact, for the lumber business, the ice business, the hunting and fishing business and the summer boarder business will thrive with very little encouragement. The timber will grow, the ice will freeze, game and fish will multiply, under present conditions, and the summer boarders will come in spite of everything. Here are four great industries that Maine leads most of her sister states in. At this season of the year she is truly a play ground for one-half of the country.

## SIDES OF OLD ORCHARD LIFE.

[CONTINUED FROM FIRST PAGE.]

the attractive little parks near the gates, the Association owns little beside the Camp ground proper and the Tabernacle, where the services are held in wet weather.

The Tabernacle, as it now stands, seats about a thousand people. It was rebuilt some years ago and the original building, put up about 1876, became a part of the present structure. It has been owned jointly and severally by the Camp-meeting Association and the M. E. Church for years, going through repeated changes, till now it is owned wholly by the Association, which has been in existence since 1876 and has included in its management many men prominent in religious affairs, not only in Old Orchard, but in the world outside.

A queer world is this summer world we are in and it takes all sorts of people to make it. Some come here for rest, some for pleasure; some for health, some for religious enjoyment; some come to make money, some come to spend it; some come away from crowded cities, some from the quiet of the country; some come to enjoy all the luxuries that wealth can produce, some to labor for a mere existence. Truly—

"Life is like a theatre; during the play we take higher or lower seats, But when the farce is over We all mingle with the common crowd, And go home."

Sunday Concert  
At the Old Orchard House.

At the Old Orchard House Sunday afternoon the following program was rendered and much enjoyed by the guests.

Overture. Pegasus Rollinson  
Spring Song Mendlesohn  
Selection. Martha, from Flotow's  
Opera Cotlin  
Clarinet Solo. Second Air Varie  
Shornton

Mabel W. Kaine  
Overture. National Airs Theo Moses

In the evening another very enjoyable program was rendered, as follows:

Overture. King of the Gnomes  
Rollinson  
Beloved Country Jurgman  
Selection. Erminie Theo. Tobani  
Cornet Solo. Non E Ver T. Mattri  
N. E. McCauley  
March. The White Squadron  
Theo. Tobani

The Newest  
Yachting Freak.

A peculiar craft has just been launched in New York. She is 40 feet over all, 22 feet on the waterline, and 2 feet 4 inches wide. She draws 5 inches, and has a fin 2 feet 7 inches. She has a lateen sail on a mast 26 feet tall, with a 27-foot yard and a 25-foot boom. There are two iron rudders, one at either end, set back from the ends 10 feet.

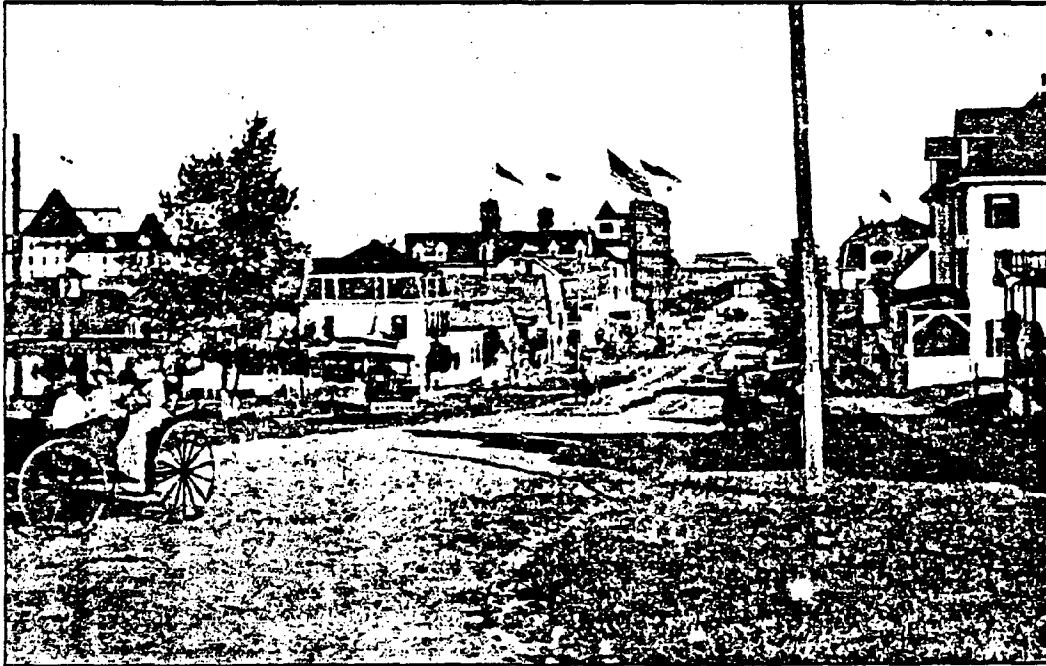
The sail is hung to the mast at the centre of the yard, so that it has an easy play, and may be turned with the least difficulty. The prow is never obliged to come about, as when it is desired to change the course of the strange looking craft the rudder at one end of the boat is locked, the sail is shifted about, and the prow starts off with the opposite rudder doing the guiding.

The boat sails always on one side, a wash board on the lee side projecting six inches over the rail preventing her from shipping water.

The Herald is for sale at the Depot News Stand, Old Orchard House, Post Office, R. S. W. Roberts', Ocean Park, by newsboys and at office of publication.

Figure 3

View of Old Orchard Street, 1899



LOOKING DOWN OLD ORCHARD STREET.

Source: The Mirror, OOB Historical Society.

The Pier and Boardwalk ca. 1905



Old Orchard House, ca. 1900

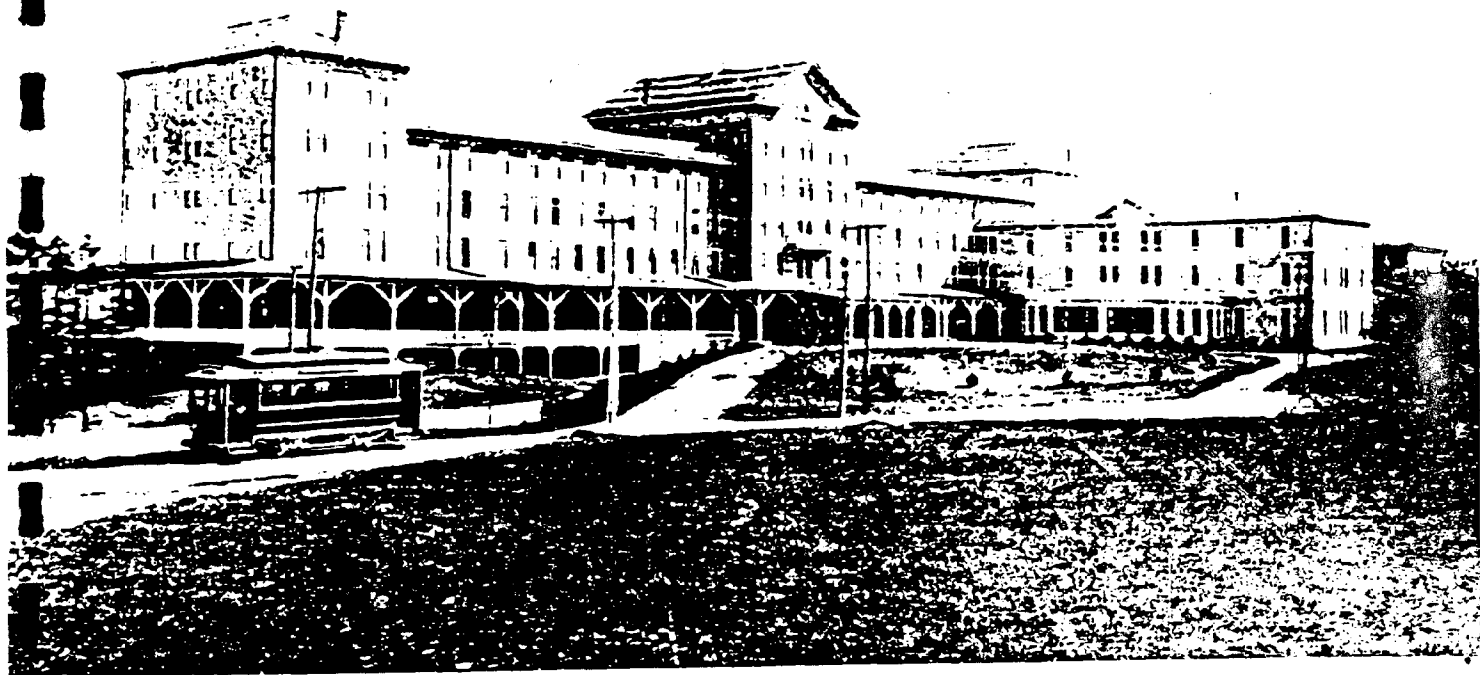
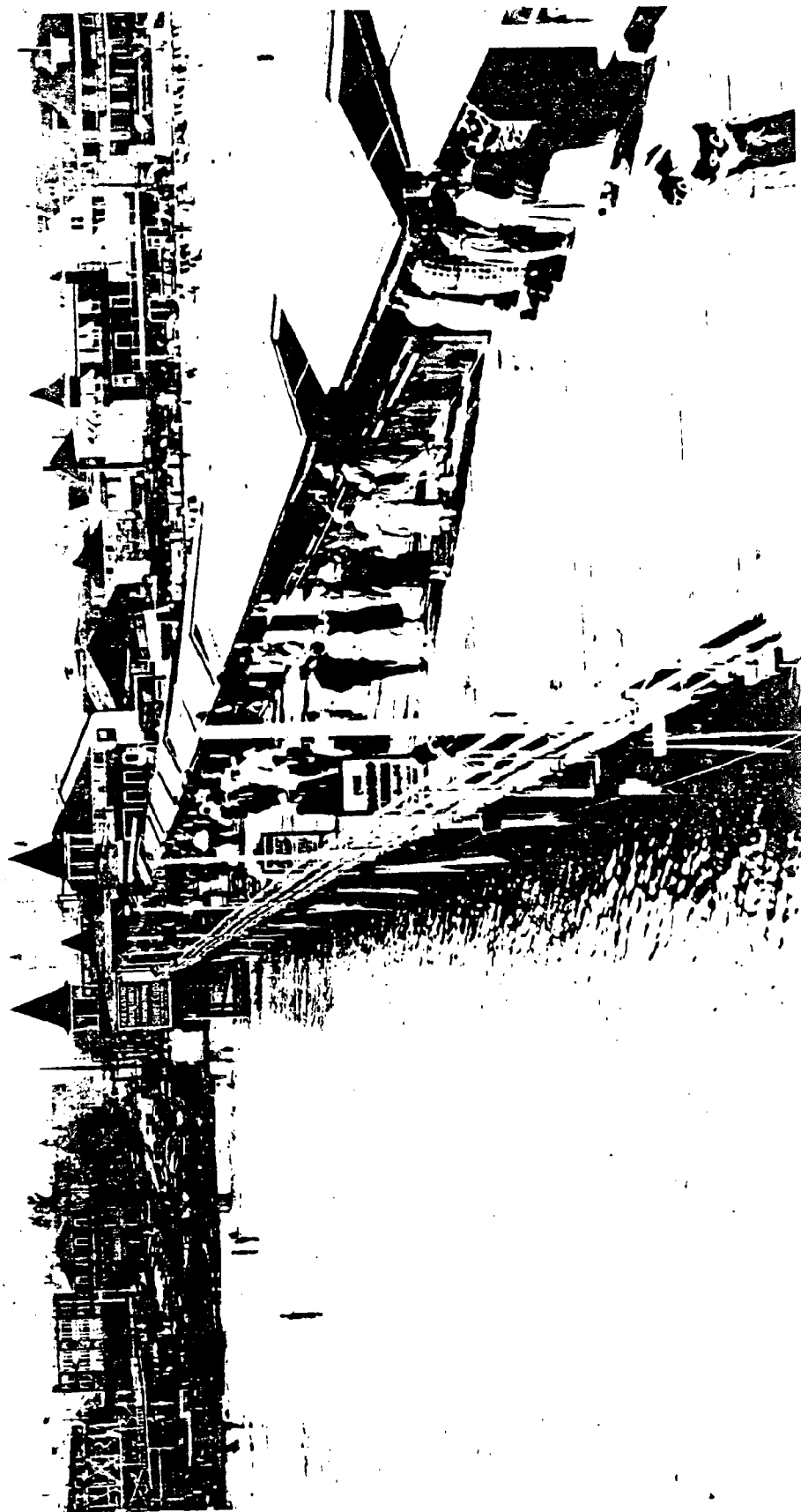


Figure 5  
View From The Pier  
ca. 1915



Source: OOB Historical Society

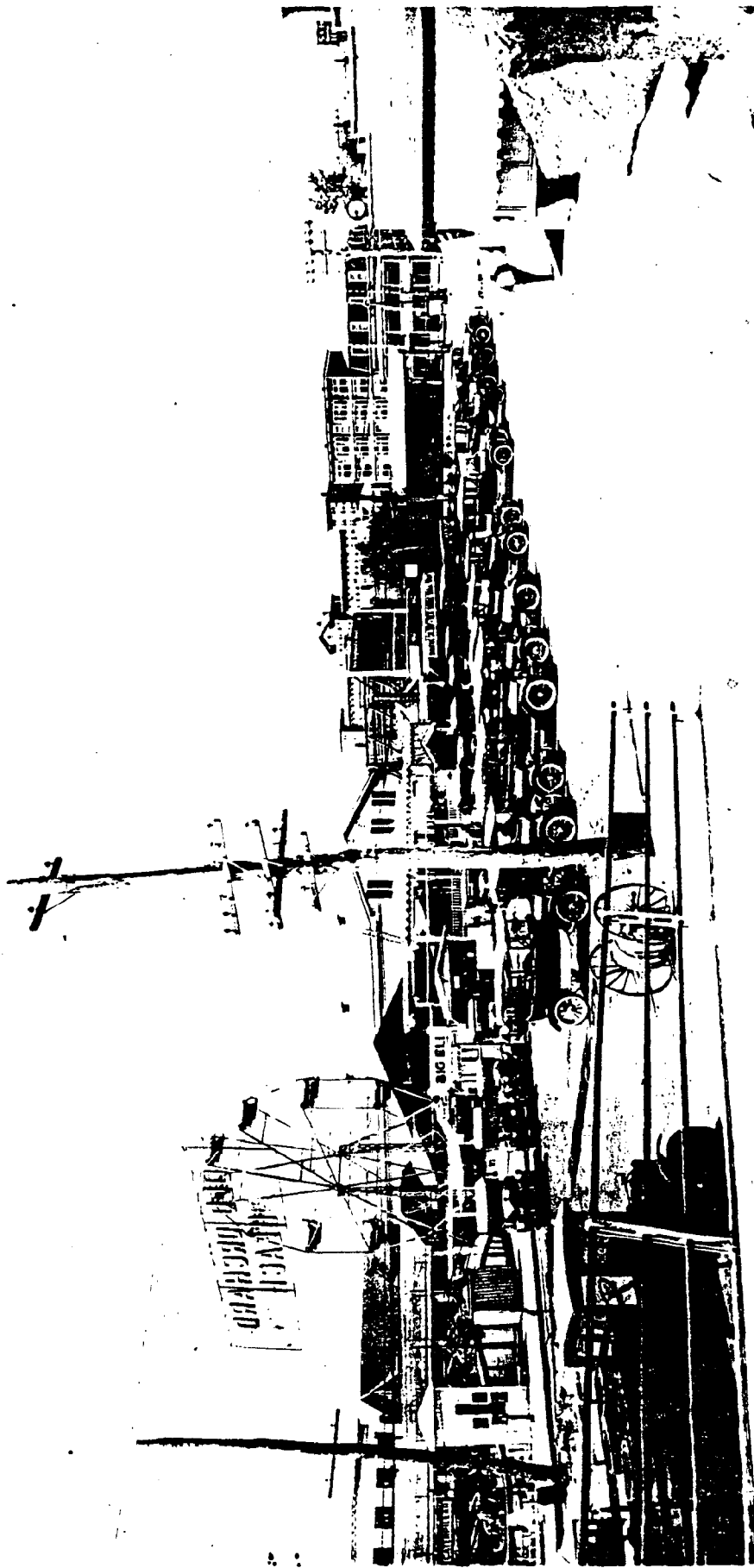


Figure 6

Parking Along Old Orchard Street  
ca. 1920

Source: OOB Historical Society

Figure 7  
Aerial View of Old Orchard Beach, ca. 1940

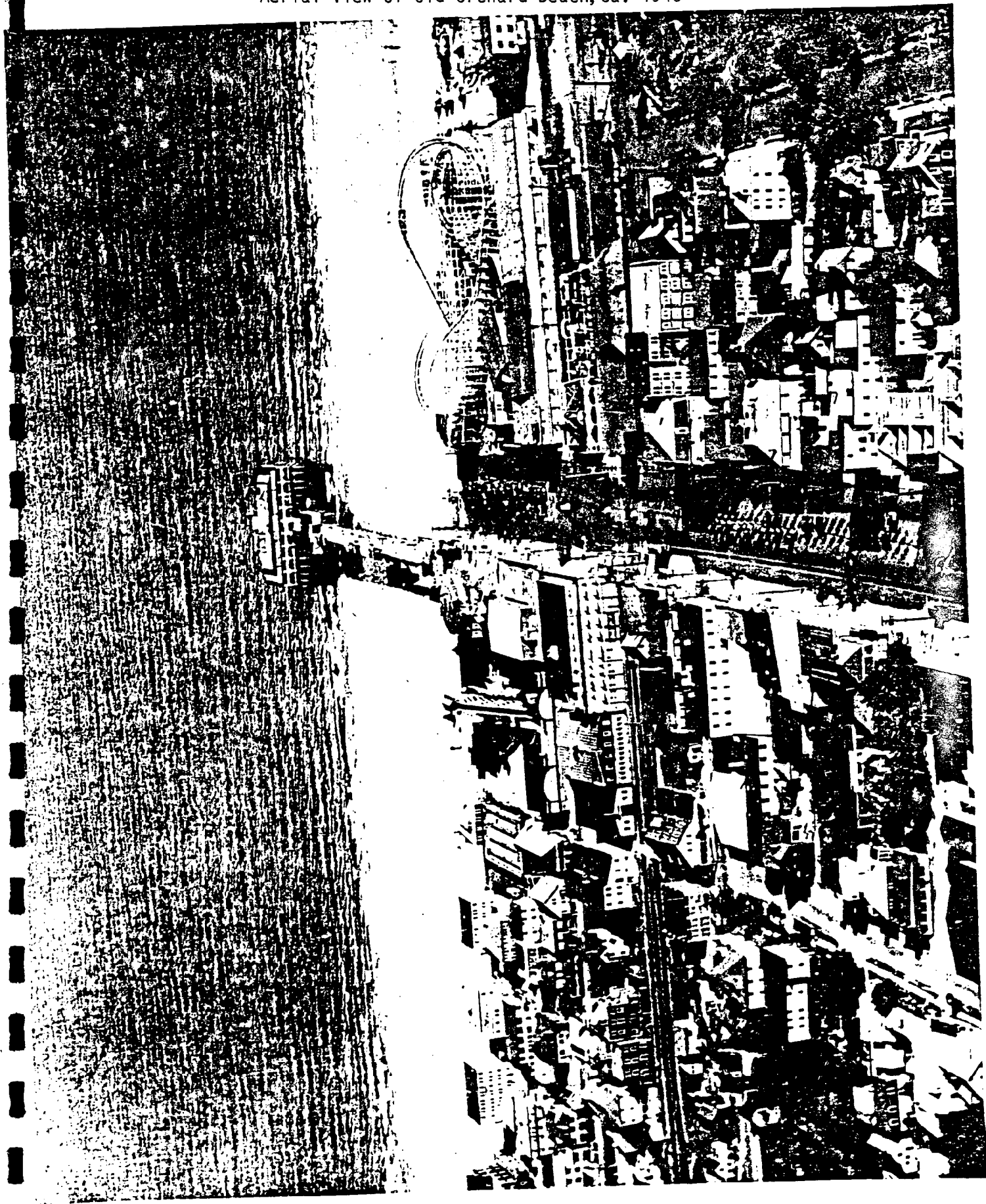
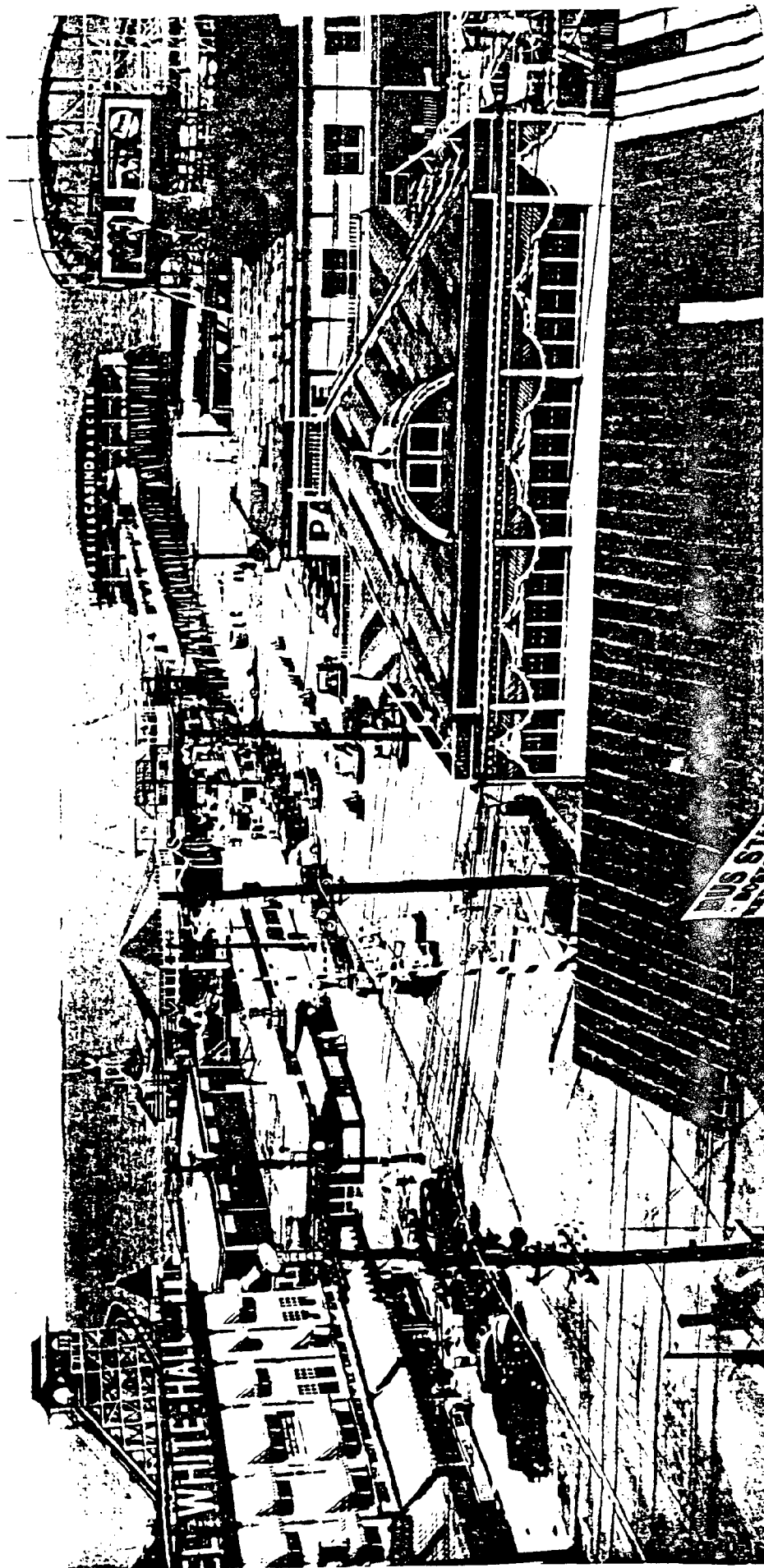
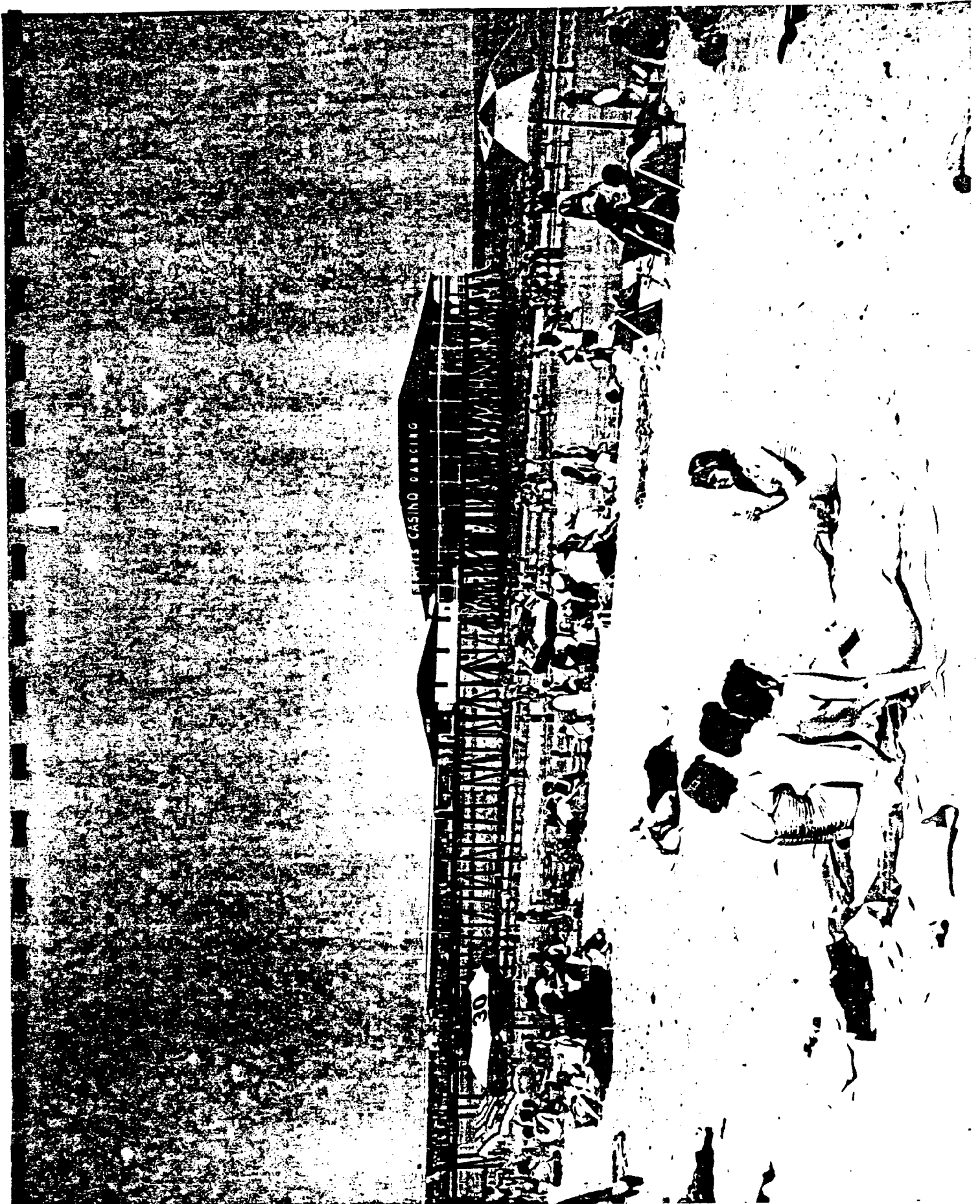


Figure 8

Old Orchard Beach Pier and Amusement Area, ca. 1940







Source: OOB Historical Society



## OLD ORCHARD BEACH

*Famous Runway to Trans-Atlantic Flight*



Lindy himself at the Beach.



Crowds At Beach Watch Lindy Hop Off

Above: The Spirit of St. Louis stands waiting on the beach at Old Orchard for its master to warm up the motor for his flight away from Maine to over the United States. Behind it stands the Spirit of St. Louis, the crowd is ready to watch Lindy hop off. Below: Augmented by thousands who came to see the flight of the Spirit of St. Louis, Lindy takes the Spirit of St. Louis into position to take off. The Spirit of St. Louis is seen in the background, flying over the city. Lindy is seen in the foreground, standing on the beach. The Spirit of St. Louis is seen in the background, flying over the city. Lindy is seen in the foreground, standing on the beach.



Table 1

HISTORIC SITES IN OLD ORCHARD BEACH

1. The Temple: Temple Avenue, 1881  
Listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Octagonal wooden structure with vaulted ceiling flanked by two meeting halls...still used for summer assembly programs in Ocean Park.
2. Old Junction Railroad Station: St. John Street, 1842  
Old railroad station moved to this site and now used for residences.
3. The Tabernacle: Union Avenue, 1873  
Located in the Salvation Army campground. The campground itself could be established as a historic district - a unique religious development.
4. Methodist Church: Washington Avenue, 1899.
5. Tower House: 6 Washington Avenue  
Remaining top three floors of old tower moved to this site as a residence.
6. Octagon House: Washington and Saco Avenues, 1878.
7. School Street Schools
8. St. Margaret's Church: Old Orchard Street, 1895.
9. Town Hall: Old Orchard Street, 1899.
10. Staples Inn: Portland Avenue.
11. Old Orchard Beach Historical Society - Portland Avenue

(See Map 2 For Locations)

#### IV. POPULATION AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

##### Population Trends

The population of Old Orchard Beach has been linked throughout its history to the recreational and seasonal uses of the town and to the population trends in the southeast Maine region. Rapid growth in population occurred after 1910 when OOB was firmly established as a resort community. Further growth occurred in the 40's as part of a pattern of urbanization in the northeast. During this time, OOB developed as a suburb to manufacturing centers in Biddeford, Saco and Portland. With the decline in manufacturing in the 50's, the population of the region declined, including a 7.7% drop in population in OOB between 1950-60 from 4,707 to 4,580.<sup>1</sup>

Since 1960, the population of the region has increased steadily. In Old Orchard Beach, the population increased 16.4% from 1970 to 1980 (from 5,404 to 6,291).<sup>2</sup> Projections by the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission (SMRPC) indicate that this growth can be expected to continue and a population approaching 10,000 is projected for the year 2000.

##### Summer Population

According to a study done for the SMRPC, the population of Southern Maine almost doubles during the summer. Old Orchard Beach, along with Wells and York, accounts for a large percentage of the seasonal influx. According to the 1962 Comprehensive Plan, an additional 18,600 people come to OOB in the summer. Over 20,500 was estimated as the added summer population in 1970. Approximately 75% of the additional population stay in hotels and motels; the remaining 25% stay in rental houses.

##### Characteristics of the Population

Since 1960, the population under age 15 has decreased while the population over age 65 has increased. Nearly 14% of the population in 1980 was 65 or older, compared to 12.7% for York County and 12.5% statewide. Over 35% of the population was found in the 15-34 age group. (See Figure 12).

Household sizes have been decreasing slightly in OOB since 1960. There are now approximately 2.5 people per household compared to 2.8 in 1970 and 3.3 in 1960. Households are predominantly married couples with children. However, most of the 46% growth in number of households since 1970 has occurred in households made up of a single female or male, single-parent households, and in households of unrelated individuals.

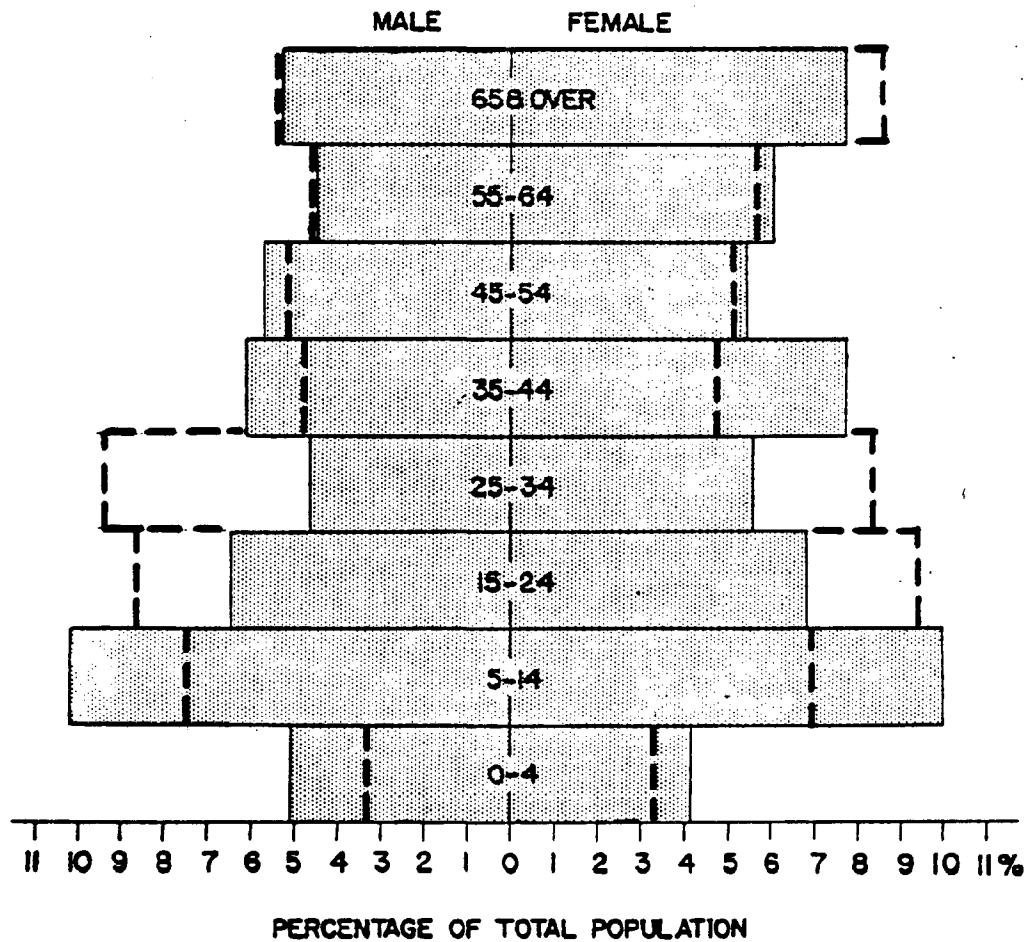
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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Census of Population, 1980.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid

FIGURE 12

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION  
BY AGE & SEX, 1960 AND 1980



OLD ORCHARD BEACH, MAINE

Source: UNITED STATES CENSUS OF POPULATION, 1960

UNITED STATES CENSUS OF POPULATION, 1980

--- 1980

### Income and Employment

The following describes the economic situation of OOB. Detailed information can be found in Appendix A.

Levels of income in OOB are significantly lower than those of York County. According to the 1980 U.S. Census, the 1980 median income in OOB of \$12,182 was more than \$3,000 below that of York County (\$15,377). The mean income of OOB (\$14,064) was also less than that of York County (\$17,200). Additionally, OOB has a higher number of households in the lower third of the income groupings.

According to the 1980 U.S. Census, the household income type for both OOB and York County are similar. The largest income type for both is 1) employment earnings, 2) income from interest, dividends, and rentals, and 3) income from social security benefits. Although the types of income are similar, the per-household income by income type shows wage earnings in OOB as \$3,000 less per household than York County. Per household wage earnings in OOB make up only 82.7% of that of York County. Public Assistance income, however, is 117% of that of York County per household income. In OOB, 13% of the population lived below the poverty level in 1980 compared to 9.5% for York County.

The labor force participation rate for OOB was 62% in 1980. The unemployment rate in OOB (10%) was approximately four percentage points higher than that of York County (5.8%) for 1980. Male unemployment in OOB was 11% while female unemployment was 8.7%. The non-worker/worker ratio for OOB (1.31) is lower than that of York County (1.37).

The 1980 U.S. Census indicates that the class of workers in both OOB and York County is similar, with approximately 75% of all workers being private wage or salaried workers. The types of employment in OOB and York County are also similar. The major differences are in the manufacture of durable goods (OOB - 17.1%, York County - 14.9%).

The largest occupation groups in OOB are operators, fabricators and laborers (23.8%), followed by service occupations (16.67%) and precision production, craft and repair occupations (16.1%).

Tourism is the single most important income generating industry. The market draws upon the Quebecois who vacation during the Bastille holidays in July.

### Income and Employment

Most of the economic problems in OOB result from the fact that employment in the town is primarily seasonal. With businesses being closed for a majority of the year, potential sales from residents and tourists are lost and the boarded up buildings create a negative impression. The owners of these businesses are predominantly non-residents, and this results in an

outward flow of money from OOB once the resort season is over. Employment resulting from tourism is typically low-paying and relies on unskilled workers, usually women or students. With these low wage rates, the income levels in OOB are held lower than that of the surrounding areas. Seasonal employment also results in lower annual wage earnings.

Income in OOB is affected by other factors, as well, which grow out of the fact that it is a resort town. For one, a major source of income is from rental accommodations. Secondly, the town is attracting many elderly retirees, and therefore social security is becoming an increasingly significant income source. Finally, because the town's main industry is tourism (and tourism doesn't generate highly skilled, high-paying jobs), the economy is dependent on unskilled, blue collar and non-professional service jobs.

Unemployment in OOB is significantly high due to seasonal unemployment, low skill levels which prevent people from competing for jobs in other areas, the general lack of industrial employment in OOB, and the closing of plants in Southern Maine and subsequent layoff of workers.

Tourism has also been affected due to the current exchange rate of \$.82 for the Canadian dollar. Because of the deflated value of Canadian currency, trips to OOB are not as affordable as in previous years. This has been demonstrated by the drop in the number of tourists and subsequent drop in sales at OOB stores during the summer season. The most recent drop in sales was during the 1982 season. Although town officials are hoping for a better season in 1983, optimism must be guarded. Due to the current international economic situation, this trend will most probably continue into the near future. One way to deal with this situation would be to focus more on promoting OOB to the American tourists and working to recapture more of that market.

#### Development Trends

According to developers in the area, most new development will be located on the ocean front and will involve the conversion to or construction of condominiums. The new shoreline zoning ordinance (which was enacted in 1982 and permits condominium conversion of an existing building as a conditional use) is seen as the impetus for the new shoreline development.

There are several projects currently under development along the ocean front. (Information concerning these developments can be found in Appendix A). Such development, however, is hampered by the difficulty of assembling property. Small lots are owned by a number of individuals who are not investing in their property and/or do not want to sell to people who will invest. Development is further hampered by the schism between these two factions and the lack of a concerted effort by the town council to promote development.



A major problem with any development in OOB is the absence of market studies to ascertain the market for various types of development. Many developments are built haphazardly, without knowledge of the possible success or failure of the project. The town would benefit from a coordinated economic development plan. Such a plan could include a variety of strategies which would 1) promote hotel and condominium development in the area around the business district and ocean-front by formulating financial packages or financing strategies for potential investors, 2) help assemble property in the area to provide parcels large enough to optimize the development potential of the area and entice investors with the probability of higher profits, 3) assist the process of diversifying its economy by improving access to land zoned for light industry (better access to I-95 would allow OOB to compete with other industrial parks in the region), and 4) promote year-round recreational activities which would attract enough tourists to keep stores open during the off-season and thus further promote locally-owned businesses.

## V. EXISTING LAND USE AND CIRCULATION

### Introduction

Existing land uses were examined for the purpose of establishing a record for further analysis of Old Orchard Beach's current condition. Information was gathered in a series of field surveys. In addition, local public officials responsible for the operation and maintenance of public facilities were contacted.

In 1962, the town of Old Orchard Beach adopted a Comprehensive Plan which established basic goals and guidelines for future growth of the community. This plan, and its 1982 amendment, are examined in Appendix B of this report. The town also has a zoning ordinance, first adopted in 1965 and revised through a comprehensive amendment in 1982. The Zoning Map (included in Appendix C) represents the current pattern of zoning including the special shoreland Districts and the new Light Industrial District that are of particular interest to this study. The town adopted subdivision regulations in 1972 to assure that any proposed subdivision will conform to strict standards and to the Comprehensive Plan. These regulations, as well as the Zoning Ordinance, are discussed in greater depth in Appendix C. The structure of the town government, which follows a town council/town manager format, is also reviewed in Appendix C.

### Existing Land Use

The general land use pattern reflects the seasonal recreational character of Old Orchard Beach (See Map 3). The existing commercial development is designed to serve the summer tourist population. Privately owned seasonal guest lodgings are scattered along the major access roads into the town and in the central business district. Some private homes have been converted into tourist homes and are intermixed with year-round single-family detached residential dwellings.

The 1982 Profile of Taxable Real Property compiled by the Old Orchard Beach Tax Assessor's Office indicates that of the town's total taxable land area of 3,386 acres, 26.5% was devoted to commercial uses, 0.3% to apartment units 21.1% to residential dwellings, 0.1% to "other" uses, and 52.1% was classified as being vacant.

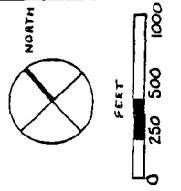
### Residential

There are five major residential areas in OOB. The area along the north and south beach strips on East and West Grand, is generally characterized by dense development of year-round and seasonal residential dwellings, hotels, motels, and rooming houses. The southern end is much less densely developed, with larger lots and more prominent seasonal and year round single-family detached dwellings. The northern end is more seasonal in nature, with a greater occurrence of summer rental accommodations.

# OLD ORCHARD BEACH, MAINE

Line 1978 by Saco Printing Company

© OLD ORCHARD BEACH RESCUE, INC. 1978  
Map 3



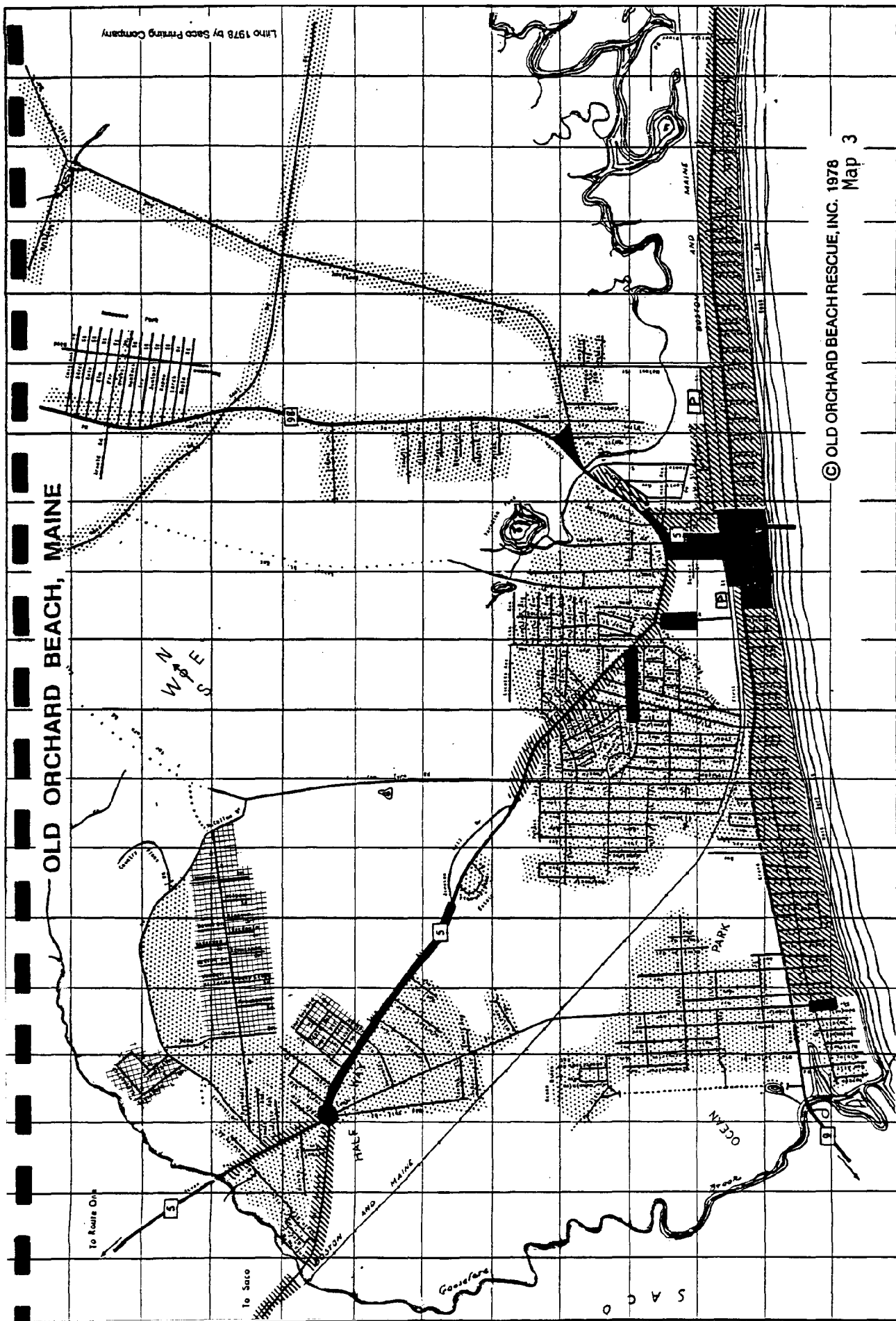
LEGEND

	TRAILER PARK		COMMERCIAL
	RESIDENTIAL		PARKING
	MIXED		UNDEVELOPED LAND

## EXISTING LAND USE

PLANNING STUDY  
OF A  
RESORT COMMUNITY  
GEORGE WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY  
DEPT OF U-R-P  
JUNE 1983

## OLD ORCHARD BEACH, ME



Adjacent to the beach and to the north of Old Orchard Street (the main commercial street) is another residential area. This area includes mostly hotels, motels and rooming houses with some seasonal and year-round residences. The homes directly to the north of Old Orchard Street are situated on small lots and are mixed with seasonal uses along the periphery (Walnut street and Imperial Street)

In 1962, the Comprehensive Plan found that the area which lies directly southwest of the central area had the highest concentration of year-round population. There is no indication that there has been any change in the past 21 years. This area is bisected by Saco Road. The major section of this area south of Saco Road is centered around the Salvation Army Campground and turns itself on the Washington Avenue commercial development. The residences are primarily permanent single- and multiple-use dwellings. Additionally, the lots are significantly smaller than those found in other parts of town. The area to the north of Saco Road is characterized by single-family dwellings on lots larger than those south of Saco Road. The more dense residential uses in this area include Centennial Plaza, the current renovation of an underutilized elementary school into federally-subsidized housing for the elderly. Additionally, both sections of this area have scattered hotels, motels, cabins, and rooming houses.

The established Baptist community of Ocean Park lies to the south of the central residential areas, its northern boundary being Tunis Avenue. The residences in Ocean Park are year-round and seasonal single-family with a few rentals along the beach front. The residences nearest to the beach, south of West Grand Avenue, are on substantially larger lots than those in the more wooded area north of the road. Along the main through street, Temple Avenue, are also situated prominent community gathering places, including the historic Temple. On the western end of Ocean Park is Ocean Pines, a federally-subsidized elderly housing complex.

The Half-Way community lies at the southwest boundary of OOB. It is also characterized by a mixture of seasonal rental and year round residential uses. However, like the central area, it has a high concentration of year-round residences. The northern end of Half Way is characterized by mobile home parks of varying types of ages. Route 5, which bisects the area, is lined with commercial uses and overnight facilities.

Other residential uses in OOB are scattered throughout the northwestern section of town, particularly along Portland Avenue, Cascade Road, and Ross Road. Here, the lots tend to be significantly larger than those in other residential areas. Orchard Terrace federally-funded family housing, is located off of Portland Avenue in this area.

### Commercial

Commercial uses are generally scattered throughout OOB. However, three areas of commercial concentration are apparent: Old Orchard Street, Washington Avenue, and Saco Avenue. Old Orchard Street caters primarily

to the seasonal tourist trade and forms the spine of the central business area. Its commercial uses consist of amusements, fast food operations, and sundry/variety stores. Commercial use continues about one block off of Old Orchard Street along East and West Grand Avenues and First Street.

The Washington Avenue commercial area is adjacent to the Salvation Army Campground residential area. Commercial uses along this street are professional service offices, dry cleaners, a variety store, television and appliance sales and service, convenience stores, and some antique and curio shops. Evidently, these uses are intended to serve the adjacent residential neighborhood.

Finally, the Saco Avenue commercial uses are mostly centered at the intersection of Old Orchard Road, Temple Avenue, Old Salt Road, and Saco Road, in the Half Way area. A shopping mall houses a fast food operation, a realtor, a specialty foods shop, a restaurant, and several fashion and clothing stores. A convenience store, a laundry, a gasoline station and assorted eating establishments are also located in this area. Other commercial uses are scattered along the Saco Avenue route through town. Additionally, Ocean Park has its own commercial area including several eating establishments, convenience stores, and a gift shop. This commercial area is focused on DeMeritt Square and extends to the beach.

#### Public Facilities

The provision of public services in OOB is a complex task for the town. Not only must the town provide services for the daily needs of its year-round residents, but these facilities must also have the capacity to adequately service the enormous tourist population which throngs to the town each summer.

Sewer: The sewerage treatment facility is located in the southwest part of Ocean Park. Most of the town is served by the facility. A few isolated homes, located in very low density areas, are serviced by septic tanks. Prior to the construction of the treatment plant, the area was serviced by a "surge system." Currently, the town is in the process of replacing this surge system with a system of water-tight pipes. This process also includes the separation of storm water from sanitary sewers. This modernization process is coordinated with any construction which involves the tearing-up of streets in OOB in order to make the most efficient utilization of time and money. Due to its construction on an incremental basis, the approximate completion of this project cannot be determined (according to the Treatment Facility Operator, Alan Burnham). The facility has the capacity to treat approximately 1-1.5 million gallons of sewage each day. However, the system has handled up to 3.5 million gallons per day during peak season.

Water: The Biddeford-Saco Water Company is a privately owned facility servicing OOB's water needs. The source of the area's water is the Saco River, noted by the President of the Company as being the cleanest river in the State of Maine. Even when the river is at its lowest point, it is still able to produce 300 million gallons each day for OOB residents. At its highest point, the amount of water able to be distributed to the area is greater than a billion gallons per day. Despite the estimated doubling of water demand each summer, the Biddeford-Saco Water Company is well equipped to deal with the increase, including sufficient pressure for fire fighting needs.

Solid Waste Disposal: The removal of solid waste is contracted out to a private collection concern, Tri-Ann. Trash collection is increased during the summer months. The garbage is taken to a town owned and operated dump located off Smithwheel Road, west of the mobile home park. Saco and Biddeford recently conducted a study for the installation of an incineration facility which will also serve OOB. The facility has been approved by the OOB Town Council; however, the location of the facility has not yet been determined. When the facility is built, the dump site will be returned to its natural state. Although definite plans for the dump site have not been formulated, the Town Manager has speculated that the dump site will eventually be used as a ski area for children.

Police and Fire: The OOB Police and Fire Departments are located in the Public Safety Complex at the intersection of T for Turn Road and Saco Avenue. The Fire Department has a full time year-round staff consisting of a Chief, a Deputy, and six drivers. The staff is not increased during the summer months since fire problems are not greater in the summer. According to the Fire Chief there is less chance of a "big fire" occurring during the summer and most incidents during the summer months are minor. The off-season months are usually the time in which the largest fires occur. Furthermore, the OOB Fire Department has a cooperative agreement with Saco and Biddeford which provides that, in case of a two-alarm fire, the engine and ladder companies located in nearby substations will automatically respond to OOB's call.

The OOB Police Department has eight full-time year-round officers and two full-time and one Part-time year-round dispatcher. During the summer months, thirty reserve patrolmen and officers for patrol, two ambulances are available for emergency rescue. While the number of vehicles for public safety has been determined to be adequate by the Town Planner, cooperative arrangements with Saco and Biddeford for emergency "back up" have been secured.

Schools: The OOB School District facilities are located near the Public Safety Complex at the Saco Avenue and T for Turn Road intersection. The Jameson Primary School includes Kindergarten through Second Grade. Currently it is running six students over its capacity of 270 students. Lawrence Bernard, Superintendent of Schools, attributes the unexpected growth to the recent trends in housing. Much of the elderly population of OOB is moving to federally-subsidized family housing units. Subsequently, as their homes are put on the market, young couples are purchasing them and enrolling their children in the OOB public school system. Mr. Bernard suspects that if these trends continue, an annex to Jameson will have to be built. He does not see this as a problem since the land is already available for such an addition.

The Loranger School includes grade 3 through 5. Currently, it is operating at 89% of its capacity. Also located in the school facilities area is the OOB Junior High School, grades 6 through 8, and the OOB High School, grades 9 through 12. The Junior High is currently running at 95% of its capacity and the High School at 81% of its capacity. The Loranger School may have difficulty in a few years as the current elementary school population ages. Both the Junior High and the High School were designed to permit an expansion of their physical plants in order to accommodate increases in their student bodies.

Recreation and Library Facilities: Publicly-owned land for open space and recreation is limited to the vast three mile stretch of prime beach land, the area immediately adjacent to the High School, and the small community park at First Street, between Staples and Heath Streets. OOB has many privately operated campgrounds and parks which cater to the summer tourist trade.

One public library serves OOB. It is located in the small community park on First Street. The 1962 Comprehensive Plan determined that the capacity of this library could accommodate increased demand as a result of significant population growth.

Administration Buildings: All municipal administrative functions are located in the Town Hall at the intersection of Old Orchard Street and Portland Avenue. In addition to the administrative functions housed in the Town Hall, the emergency rescue vehicles are maintained on the ground level. An Arts Center is also located on the ground floor. The Historical Society is located directly across the street, facing Portland Avenue.

Parking and Undeveloped Land: There are many parking facilities located in OOB. The highest concentration of these small facilities is in the central area, along East and West Grand Avenues, Milliken Street, Imperial Street, Union Street and Heath Street. In total, the registered parking facilities in the central area number 995 (as compared to the total of 1900 for the entire town).

Much of OOB's land area consists of undeveloped parcels. Most of the land which is vacant is designated for rural use by the town's zoning ordinance. Generally, these areas lie in the northern and western sections of town and are traversed by Portland Avenue, Cascade Road, Ross Road, Milliken Mills Road and the School Street extension. Other areas which have remained undeveloped are in environmentally critical areas, along the Goosefare Brook and Mill Brook 100-year floodplains.

Recently, proposals have been made to develop some of these vacant parcels and some have been approved by the Town Council. A Triple A baseball stadium is currently being designed for the site west of Saco Avenue and north of T for Turn Road, behind the existing Police and Fire facility. There has also been a preliminary proposal for the development of a performing arts center on the site of an existing sand pit, directly west of the County Pines and Smithwheel Road intersection. As of this date, however, there has been no indication that further plans are underway for this site.

## Circulation

The road system is currently in a state of disrepair and cannot adequately handle the amount of traffic generated during the summer months. Responsibility for the maintenance of roads and streets within the Urban Line falls to the municipality. All roads outside the Urban Line are under the jurisdiction of the State of Maine. As OOB continues to develop, the burden it will bear for timely repair of its streets will increase.

Old Orchard Beach's major access routes are Route 5 and 98, which bisect the town. Route 5, Saco Avenue, leads to regional routes 1 and I-95. These roads also connect the southwestern portion of the town to the Central Business District. Route 98, Cascade Road, leads directly into Portland and the northwestern areas of town. Another important road which traverses Old Orchard Beach is Route 9, referred to locally as East and West Grand Avenues. These are also major linkages to the neighboring communities of Saco and Scarborough. Local roads which provide important through-town access are Temple Avenue, Union Avenue, First Street and T for Turn Road. (See Map 3)

The only public transportation available is the Biddleford/Saco/OOB bus system which attempts to link these communities. OOB does not have its local services. Some of the elderly housing developments provide bus service for their own residents.

## Natural Areas

Old Orchard Beach's attractive rural quality is characterized by gently rolling hills, dense woodlands, meandering brooks and streams, marshland, and an eastern shoreline of fine sandy beaches. (See Map 4)

Bordering the town to the north and south are the major tidal marshes, Mill Brook and Goosefare Brook respectively. A smaller marsh is located in the Ocean Park residential area west of West Grand, between Casco and Tunis Avenue. Milliken Pond, north of Adelaide, is connected to the Mill Brook Marsh by a meandering stream.

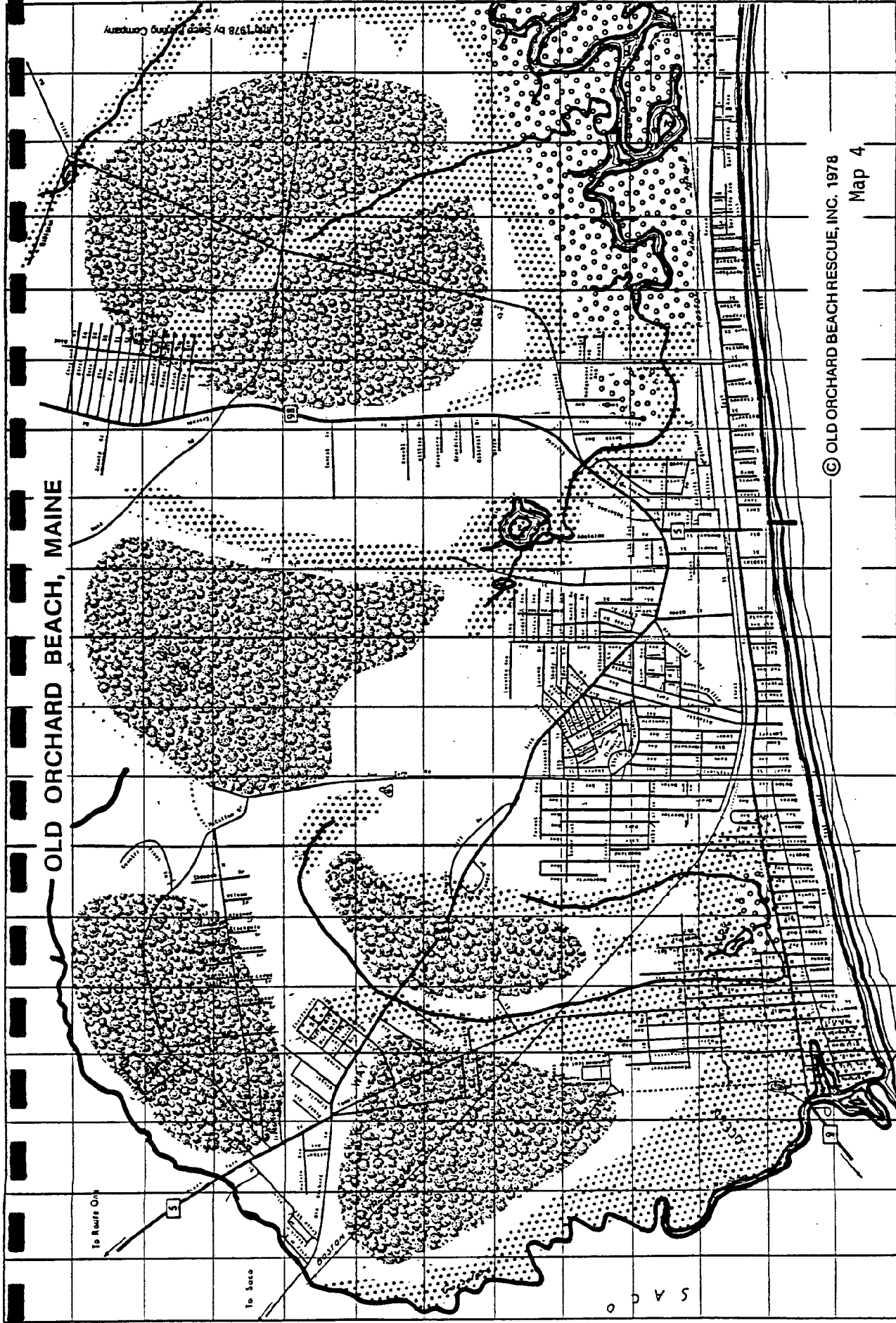
OOB enjoys many wooded areas, though some are more dense than others. The densest concentration of tall white and red pines grace the Baptist community of Ocean Park, and the area surrounding Smithwell Road. The latter is also interspersed with meadowland, especially near Country Pines Road.

Other wooded areas are found surrounding the high school and another surrounds Ross Road and Portland Avenue. These areas contain predominantly secondary tree growth, the dominant species noted being aspen, birch and pine.

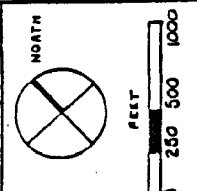
The beach, which fronts Saco Bay, is the most outstanding natural feature and is the major attraction to Old Orchard Beach. It is approximately seven miles long, with grassy dunes extending along its back shore and protecting abutting properties from storm waves.

Ocean Park is a bird sanctuary and many different species of shorebird and waterfowl enjoy the habitats the dunes and marshes provide. (A complete





# OLD ORCHARD BEACH, MAINE



- LEGEND**
- FLOODPLAIN
  - WETLANDS
  - FORESTLAND

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

PLANNING STUDY  
OF A  
RESORT COMMUNITY  
GEORGE WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY  
DEPT OF U-RP  
JUNE 1983

OLD ORCHARD BEACH, ME

© OLD ORCHARD BEACH RESCUE, INC. 1978  
Map 4

listing can be found in the OOB Critical Area Treatment Study Report.) A more detailed analysis of the area's natural resources and environmental quality can be found in Appendix D .

### Conclusions

OOB is a town whose land uses have adapted to its seasonal character. The seasonal nature of the town has created a mix of uses that would normally be considered unsuitable for residential areas. Although this very combination of uses gives OOB some of its special character, instances involving a mix of incompatible uses does create problems. One example is the location of a town dump across from a residential area. Such improper relationships between incompatible uses has probably led to the low images of those areas of town in which they appear.

Another impediment to the attractive residential areas has been the lack of guidelines for the construction and siting of mobile home parks. The older parks are currently on poorly sited lots and are in deteriorated condition.

Commercial uses throughout OOB are insufficient to meet the daily needs of year-round residents. Most shopping is done in the neighboring towns of Saco and Biddeford. Not only have year-round residents been inconvenienced, but the town has lost this revenue and an opportunity to supplement its tax base.

The street system within OOB currently needs maintenance so that it can adequately serve the population growth during the summer months. Also a more clearly designated system of streets (defining highways, arterials, collector and local streets), designed and developed according to their specific function, would assist in separating different types of traffic and expediting movement.

In addition, streets are not clearly identified with street signs and pedestrian ways are inadequate to accommodate the number of tourists which flock to the town each summer. A clear delineation of street types coordinated with important pedestrian routes would help alleviate the considerable conflict which exists between pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Insufficient parking facilities, and improper access to those facilities which do exist, increase the congestion in OOB. Each summer it is not unusual for spaces on private residential lawns to be filled with automobiles which have paid for the opportunity to park near the beach and commercial uses. Congestion created by insufficient parking spaces not only obstructs access to the beach, but also creates an unsightly image along OOBs most valuable land.

The large amount of undeveloped land in OOB, coupled with the lack of public open space devoted to either active or passive recreational use, seems to suggest a lack of coordinated planning for the utilization of open space. Perhaps some undeveloped parcels could be developed for the benefit of residents and tourists and at a profit to the town.

Although public facilities which service the town can adequately handle the increase in summer population, the public school system is the one public facility whose capacity may reach its upper limit in the near future. It appears timely for OOB to address the issue of plans and financing for this anticipated growth.

## VI. VISUAL ANALYSIS

### PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The existing land uses in an area provide a host of information about an area's character. But more telling than just a description of the existing land uses is the visual image; the impressions created by the built and natural environments and the arrangement of the physical spaces. Objective discussion of the existing land uses, combined with perceptions developed in a visual analysis create a revealing picture of the existing conditions of the study area. In OOB, the visual analysis proved to be a vital part in the understanding of the qualities, the problems and the potentials of the community.

### Methodology

The subjective nature of any visual analysis necessarily reflects the perceptions and values of those administering the study. As non-residents of OOB, we gained an understanding of the area through a series of visual surveys conducted by car, by bicycle, and by foot. The results of this study represent a synthesis of the impressions offered to motorists, to cyclists, and to pedestrians. These impressions were recorded on maps and in photographs.

### Impressions

First impressions are especially memorable and are particularly important to a description and analysis of the visual quality of an area. Impressions are simply what is seen, ideally without preconception. Impressions reveal how we feel about where we are -- the sense of vitality or identity -- what's special about a place.

OOB's image suffers from a general lack of vitality. This is reflected by the poor visual quality of the built environment. This impression was reinforced since we studied OOB in the late spring, prior to the summer activity and crowds for which this resort community is well known.

Our initial observations left us with the general impression that much of OOB's potential was not being used to its fullest.

### Natural Environment

OOB is located on Maine's scenic coast that attracts many tourists. The natural setting of OOB is key to OOB's sense of specialness and to its identity as a popular resort and recreational area.

The abundance of attractive woodlands, the marshes, and the miles of beautiful beach neatly define the edges of the town and provide enormous recreational assets to OOB. Particularly noteworthy are: Goosefare Creek and Mill

Brook; the woodlands south and west of Ocean Park and between OOB and Scarborough; and certain areas along the Portland Avenue Corridor (See Map 4).

### Approaches

The approaches to OOB are the Maine Turnpike, Saco Avenue, and West Grand Avenue from the south; and Portland Avenue and East Grand Avenue from the north.

These approaches are edged with scattered homes and cottages, motels, private campgrounds and commercial concerns. This discontinuity that is experienced as one first approaches OOB sets a tone of disorder and confusion.

Approaches, which are usually along the major linkages between peripheral and central activity areas, can provide anticipation for entrances into the area. They can be scenic corridors that reflect special qualities or character and can create definite edges that separate and distinguish one area from another. (See Map 5).

On entering OOB the approaches are ambiguous and, at places, confusing. There are no clear transitions or entrances into OOB. Separate areas of the town are not easily discernible. For example, a lack of direction and focus is apparent around the central area. One is led past, not to, the main area of town -- Old Orchard Street. Another example is the approach from the southwest, along Saco Avenue where the residential area appears so abruptly there is no time to anticipate the transition into the central area and, soon after, the junction and entrance at Saco and Portland Avenues and Old Orchard Street.

### Neighborhoods

The neighborhoods which contain important focal points, such as historic community buildings and scenic edges and corridors, are Ocean Park, the Campground area, and beachfront and the area around West Temple Avenue. These neighborhoods enhance the visual quality of OOB as well as give the town a richer sense of heritage and identity. Ocean Park clearly marks its entrances with stylized signage at its entry boundaries. Its historic community buildings located on Temple Avenue provide a focal point for the neighborhood. Furthermore, the area around DeMeritt Square is another kind of focal point for Ocean Park. Several small shops and a private library add to Ocean Park's special identity as a neighborhood.

The Campground Area has a unifying historic quality which brings the neighborhood together. The natural amphitheater around which it is set produces an interesting irregular pattern as the base for the neighborhood. The houses, situated on tiny lots, give the area a close-knit appearance, the narrow streets rising and falling with changes in the topography. The Salvation Army Tabernacle provides a visual focus for the Campground area; its condition, however, is somewhat deteriorated.



The beachfront area along East Grand Avenue is a medley of private residences, hotels, and seasonal commercial concerns. The array of colors and textures give the area a unique appeal. The commercial uses are complimentary to those along the main street - the orientation to the CBD is unmistakable. In the evening, the lights are intriguing to the passer-by. The residential uses further north along Grand Avenue are muted in comparison.

The West Temple Avenue area is different from the other areas of town in that it is the only one without a unifying theme. Housing styles vary from modern suburban-type to older mobile homes in disrepair. Saco Avenue is the focal point for this residential area. The commercial uses scattered along the road are anchored at the intersection of Temple Avenue and Saco Road, the center of this area. The disunity in the residential pockets, however, gives the area a disorderly image.

#### CBD: Old Orchard Street

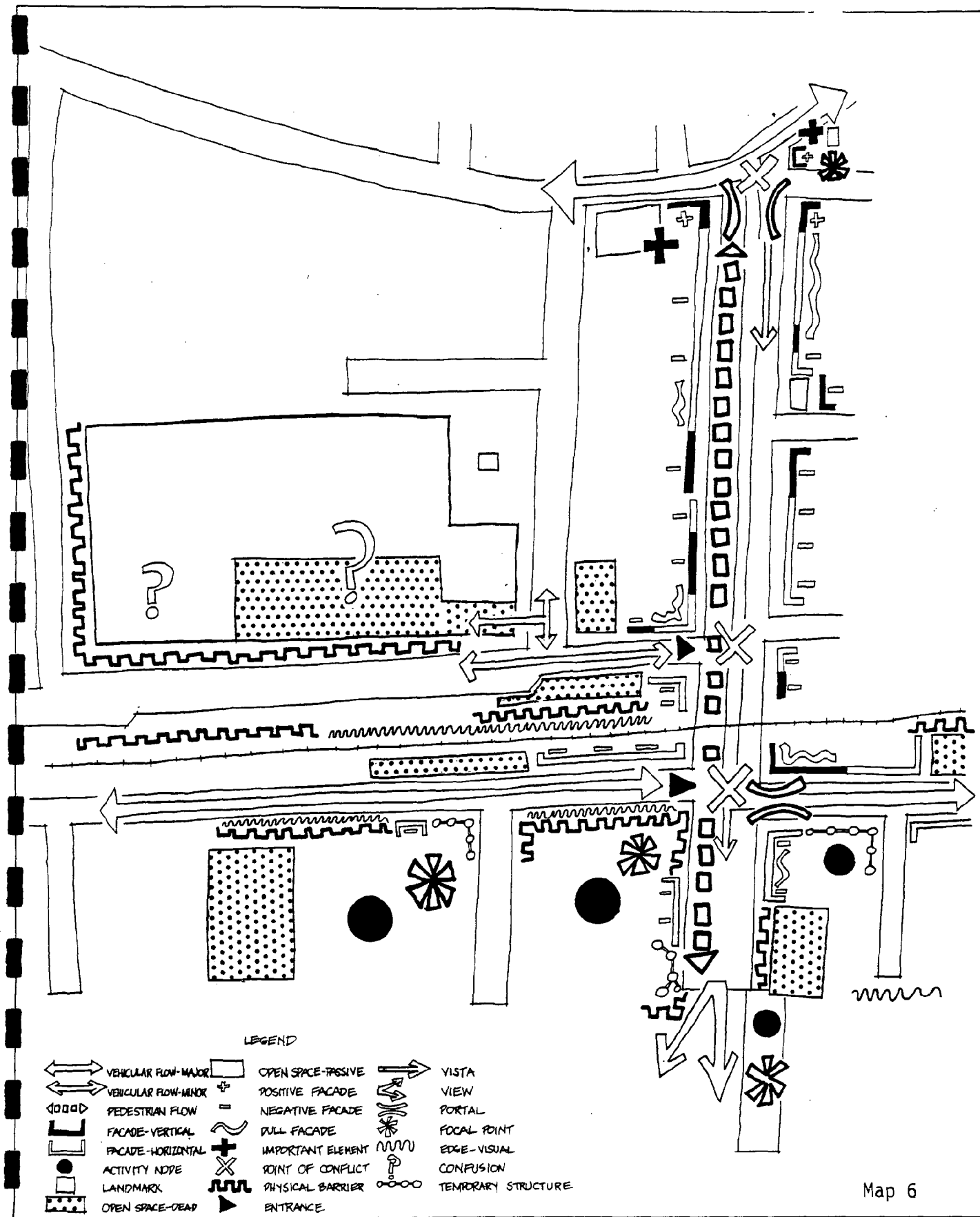
Old Orchard Street represents the major activity center for OOB. One of the street's most unique and exciting features is its vista from the top of Old Orchard Street.

From the top of Old Orchard Street one can see directly to the ocean. However, the deteriorated buildings framing the vista and the general negative visual quality of the streetscape detract from this beautiful image (See Map 6 and Figure 11). Further more, the lack of continuity and personality in the buildings along Old Orchard Street, and the other parts of the central business district, are in sharp contrast to some of the residential areas which contribute greatly to the special quality and character of OOB.

The buildings along Old Orchard Street are, for the most part, one story horizontal structures. The facades are generally dull and lack continuity. Unattractive advertisements and glaring neon signs hang from the storefronts while an array of overhead power lines and poles add to the visual confusion.

Asphalt covers the entire right-of-way differentiated only by curbs. Problems of slow moving, two-way traffic and cars pulling in and out of parking spaces create conflicts even though Old Orchard Street is approximately 70 feet wide. Other conditions contribute to the distressing conditions of the CBD: inconsistent and incompatible signage; deteriorated structures side-by-side with new condominium development; a glaring absence of landscaping in front of motels painted with clashing colors; a profusion of scattered parking lots with uncontrolled access to abutting streets; and the town's amusements obstructing access to the beachfront.

Noise from one particularly popular mode of transportation--motorcycles--and constant impediments to free and pleasant pedestrian movement also contribute immensely to the distressing conditions of the CBD.

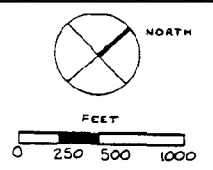


Map 6

OLD  
ORCHARD  
BEACH, ME.

PLANNING STUDY  
OF A  
RESORT COMMUNITY  
GEORGE WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY  
DEPT OF U-R-P  
JUNE 1983

# VISUAL SURVEY: DOWNTOWN





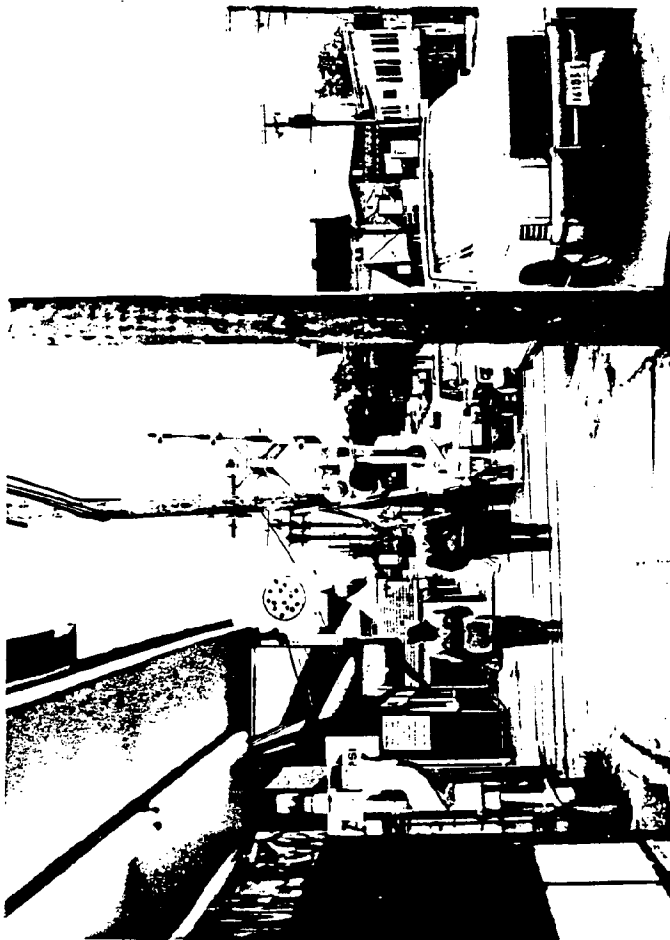
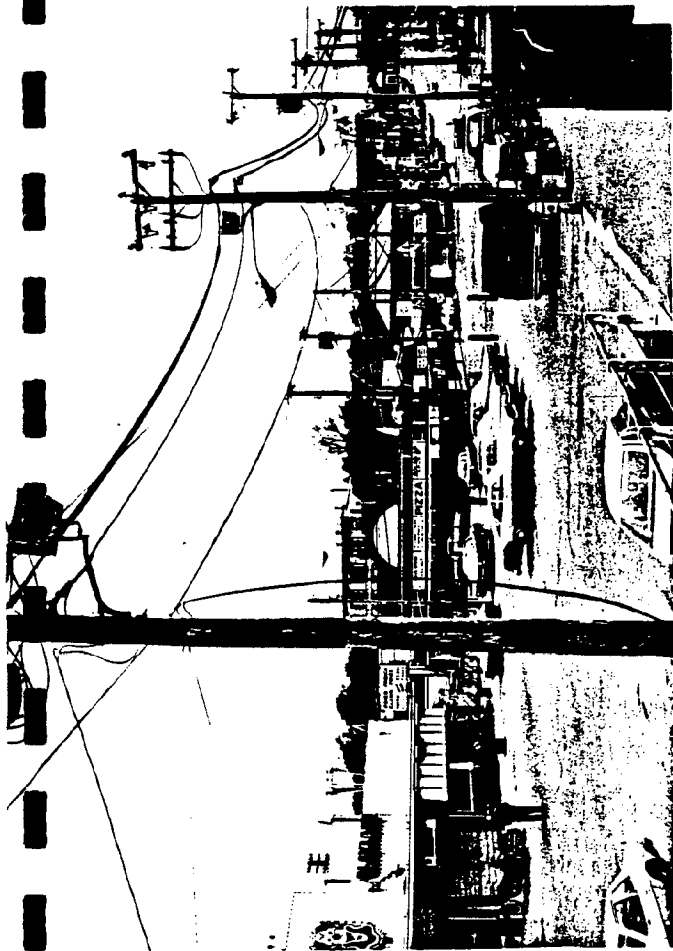


Figure 11. Views Of Old Orchard Street, 1983

## Views and Vistas

From the top of Old Orchard Street is one of the most impressive views of the ocean. Views and vistas contribute much to the visual vitality of OOB. They are, unfortunately, diminished by the blight of the built environment along Old Orchard Street and East and West Grand Avenues. The lack of any special treatment of the central area along the beach and at the pier is also obvious. Moreover, the beach is almost entirely obstructed both visually and physically, as one travels along the major parallel routes.

## Points of Conflict

The entrances into the CBD--Grand and First Avenues and the intersection at the top of Old Orchard Street--represent points of activity and intense conflict between the alternate modes of travel by area tourists, residents, and merchants (i.e., pedestrian, auto, motorcycle, and bicycle).

Problems related to overcrowding at entrances create confusion and make it almost impossible to discern where one is and where one might like to go.

The inaccessibility of the beach from west of the railroad tracks is a major problem. All pedestrians and vehicles must bottleneck through the railroad right-of-way on Old Orchard Street, creating an intense point of conflict.

## Beach

The most essential focus in OOB is the beach; it is the primary reason why thousands of tourists have visited the area every summer for the past 100 years. Despite the fact that the beach and pier are areas of considerable activity, there is a lack of visual vitality. Without any organized focal points, the area lacks (both symbolically and actually) a real center of activity to provide the qualities of specialness and identity, a sense of orientation, and a memorable image or experience. There is nothing special about being there beyond enjoyment of the wonderful natural environment, and the transient experience of impulse buying. The beach is what gives OOB its significance as a summer resort. The delightful experience of the ocean and the beach exists in sharp contrast to the visual chaos and activity of the surrounding area. The beach is the town's greatest asset; yet, there is only limited access between the beach and the central area. The panorama of the bay is almost entirely obstructed, even from the pedestrian area at the bottom of Old Orchard Street.

## Conclusions

Due to its seasonal character as a resort community, and as a result of its history of destructive fires and storms, today OOB is generally characterized by a disordered ensemble of buildings, open spaces, and streets.

At times this discontinuity adds a certain sense of excitement, for example along Grand Avenue. For the most part, however, it leaves the town with a disorganized appearance. One cannot help but experience in a town of disarray-- a lack of identity, character and personality in the built environment which has left the town without an overall special character. Also, the lack of special attention to the natural environment and the failure to capitalize on its assets has left the town with an unkempt appearance.

Specifically, the problems are the result of the fact that the town has not capitalized on its positive qualities, of which there are an abundance. For one, the approaches, entrances, and access points are not defined and the result is confusion and ambiguity. Second, the town's chief attraction, the beach, is difficult to see and to get to. A railroad track and auto congestion disrupt access to the beachfront. Third, the existing circulation pattern is not ordered--there is no separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Major conflicts abound between cars, pedestrians, and cyclists. Finally, the haunting lack of vitality during the off-season months exacerbates the deteriorated, disordered, and characterless qualities of the built environment in the central area.

OOB has the right ingredients today to become a more vital and pleasant place to vacation and to live. The scenic areas along Temple Avenue and Grand Avenue should provide delightful approaches; the views and vistas from Old Orchard Street and other streets parallel to the bay and beach should be protected and highlighted; special focal points should be established or highlighted as landmarks; the human scale of the built environment should be retained and enhanced; the natural environment could be developed for year-round use; and the historic and natural qualities of the town, beach, and the pier should be capitalized upon. These individual aspects of the town's positive features have even more potential to the extent that they can be better related and integrated. Such a coordinated approach would further heighten and expand their total value to OOB.

## VII. ASSESSMENT, OBJECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The information and findings of each of the research teams were synthesized and a list of problems and potentials developed. Before these could be addressed, it was necessary to establish goals and objectives to guide the development of proposals. This chapter presents the study team's assessment of the community's strengths and weaknesses and sets up some guidelines for future action.

Our community assessment was based on the assumptions that:

- the baseball park will be built
- the railroad tracks will remain in their current location for the indefinite future
- clearly defined residential neighborhoods will remain substantially unchanged
- the present mixture of seasonal and year-round uses will remain
- tourism will continue to be the town's major industry
- wetlands will be preserved as natural areas
- historic buildings and neighborhoods will be protected
- the population will follow national trends toward a larger elderly population and smaller household size
- the exchange rate will continue to be unfavorable for Canadian dollars and will have an impact on tourism in OOB
- housing trends will continue toward more elderly housing, improved modular homes, and condominiums

### Problems and Potentials

In the course of studying the community, it became apparent that OOB, like all communities, has its share of problems related to its transportation systems, economic base, quality of life, visual quality, and image. Many of these problems, however, could be turned into potentials for community improvement. Also many assets already exist which the town could capitalize on to solve some of its problems.

#### Problems

##### Transportation:

- no clearly defined pedestrian system; a lack of adequate sidewalks, crosswalks, and signals
- poor road conditions
- inadequate stormwater drainage

#### Transportation: (continued)

- lack of street signs and information signs to direct visitors
- location of railroad tracks creates a barrier and restricts auto and pedestrian access to either side of the tracks

#### Economic Base:

- lack of local year-round employment and reliance on seasonal jobs which keep incomes lower in OOB than elsewhere in the country
- lack of local investment in year-round business which furthers the dependence on the seasonal trade
- lack of intensive business district development to maximize revenue generation
- difficulty of assembling lots to create developable parcels which would attract investors

#### Quality of Life and Image:

- lack of complete range of year-round goods and services in local shopping areas
- lack of accessible, useable open spaces other than the beach and the small central park
- location of the dump near residences and sites for proposed future development
- deterioration of houses and stores which creates visual blight and detract from the residents' quality of life.
- obstruction of sight lines to the ocean by signs, overhead power lines, and buildings
- lack of strong focal points and activity nodes in the central area
- lack of adequate regulations and guidelines to enhance the visual quality - and hence the image - of OOB
- lack of enforcement of existing state and local regulations

#### Potentials

##### Transportation:

- an existing street pattern which lends itself to systematic organization
- railroad right-of-way which could be used for bike/hiking trails or a local trolley system

#### Economic Base:

- land zoned for light industrial uses which could attract businesses that would furnish the needed year-round jobs, services, and investment
- baseball park which will attract more visitors and tax revenue, as well as improve the image of the town
- annual influx of tourists which provides a substantial market for local goods and services

#### Quality of Life and Image:

- the Pier, a unique attraction which could be enhanced as a major focal point
- historic buildings and districts which are unique and give OOB a special identity
- the beach, the vital asset of OOB
- an abundance of woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife preserves which offer potential recreation sites
- closing the dump as a part of a long-range effort to improve the areas along T for Turn and Smithwheel Roads
- strong neighborhood identities
- the approach to the CBD from Saco Road which offers unique historic buildings, a vista to the ocean, and the entrance to the commercial heart of the town
- indications that the people of OOB have a strong desire to see an improvement in the town's image, economy, and quality of life

#### Goals and Objectives

The study team developed two major project goals to use as a focus for efforts to address the town's problems and potentials. Specific objectives were then formulated as means to achieve these major goals.

##### Goal #1: To Improve The Quality of Life

##### Objectives:

- upgrade existing housing conditions
- improve year-round employment opportunities
- increase public open space and year-round recreation facilities
- improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems
- attract year-round businesses and light industry
- broaden tax base

## Goal #2: To Improve the Town's Image

### Objectives:

- attract new kinds of development that will enhance and capitalize on the town's historic resort character
- improve the visual quality of the CBD
- provide diversified year-round recreation
- attract a greater variety of tourists from all parts of the U.S. and Canada

### Recommendations

Following the research, analysis identification of problems and potentials, and project objectives, the study team developed a series of alternative plans and formulated the recommendations which follow. (The team's specific proposals are contained in Chapter VIII.)

#### A. Economics/Development

##### \*Economic Diversification-

- diversify commercial uses to serve year-round market
- provide low interest loans for new businesses
- prepare market analysis to see if OOB can support super market

##### \*Expand Tax Base-

- encourage recirculation of local money within the area
- attract industry to industrial zone through improvements in access, financing, facilities, services
- establish policy to guide condominium development and help developers assemble parcels suitable for development

#### B. Land Use

##### \*Promote Year-Round Recreational Activities for Tourists and Residents-

- examine possibility of civic use of baseball stadium
- develop recreational uses in vacant parcels
- develop wetlands for nature preserve

##### \*Enhance Residential Areas-

- consider rehabilitation programs
- neighborhood conservation districts
- eliminate incompatible uses in residential areas or provide adequate buffers
- encourage the concentration of commercial uses within neighborhood areas
- examine possibility of changing B-2 zone to discourage strip development

### C. Environmental

#### \*Water/Drainage-

- extend floodplain zone area
- correct drainage problems at Ocean Park
- continue process of separating storm and sanitary sewers increase capacity
- treat stormwater runoff

#### \*Beach-

- continue to manage dunes: erect and maintain boardwalks, snow fencing, protect dune grass through enforceable ordinances, fines
- improve public awareness of environmental problems through signage, information signs on beach, explanation of importance of dunes
- work with adjacent communities to coordinate development and linkages between nature preserves in the flood plain

### D. Downtown

#### \*Organize Vehicular and Pedestrian Systems-

- identify streets, pedestrian ways, establish hierarchy of streets
- provide public information signs

#### \*Relieve Traffic Congestion-

- develop land for parking facilities coordinated with circulation system
- promote public transportation connecting activity nodes and parking
- improve sidewalks
- establish bicycle trails

### E. Image

#### \*Establish a clear and highly visible activity node/visual focus in the central area

#### \*Encourage redevelopment along the central area beachfront in accordance with an overall development plan for the central area

#### \*Develop design guidelines and standards for new development and designated areas of downtown such as Old Orchard Street-

- inventory signs: eliminate those which are non-conforming according to ordinance and establish criteria for signage in CBD
- develop and protect primary pedestrian areas and access to major activity area in the central area



-continue efforts to eliminate overhead wires

\*Develop a year-round recreational/cultural center in conjunction with the baseball stadium

\*Capitalize on Historic Background of OOB

- establish historic districts
- use motifs from past to promote new development
- provide new tourist activities, walking tours, exhibits, etc.
- identify historically significant buildings

## VIII. PROPOSALS

A variety of alternative proposals for changes in Old Orchard Beach were explored. Suggestions ranged from the very broad, regional type of proposal, requiring cooperation with neighboring communities for implementation, to rather precise suggestions for relieving traffic congestion in the central commercial area around Old Orchard Street. Proposals varied not only in physical scope, but also in the range of time which might be required to implement them and cost of implementation. Also taken into consideration were the desires of residents, available funds, and the needs of tourists.

From considerable discussions of these various alternative, two major proposals evolved; one for the town as a whole, and the other for redevelopment of the downtown area around East and West Grand Avenues and Old Orchard Street. These ideas are presented, not as alternatives, but as two interrelated concepts for changing the image and quality of life of Old Orchard Beach.

### Issues

In formulating these concepts, the study team found that there were several issues to be addressed:

- \*The first was the area zoned L1 (see Zoning Map in Appendix C)--the area slated for the baseball stadium and industrial use. It was felt that planned and coordinated development of this area was crucial to create a focus for year-round activity in such a way that the stadium served a variety of uses and was complemented by other year-round development.
- \*Secondly, vehicular and pedestrian circulation in the built up areas were felt to be in need of attention. At the height of the summer season, the downtown area is crippled by insufficient parking, poor traffic patterns, and limited access to the beach. The team agreed that the existing, straightforward layout of major streets in the town should not be basically altered, but that some changes were necessary, either through the creation of a seasonal one-way system or by a realignment of streets, or by a combination of these measures.
- \*Thirdly, it was suggested that existing neighborhood shopping areas be developed to become focal points for each of the neighborhoods.
- \*A fourth issue addressed was the provision of year-round recreational facilities. It was felt that these facilities should, in view of the upcoming opening of the baseball stadium, both draw on the town's existing resources and be inexpensive to implement and maintain. It is also important that facilities offer year-round recreation to town residents as well as to tourists.

\*Lastly, special proposals for the downtown commercial area dealt with parking, circulation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and the visual quality of the downtown generally. Making the downtown an easy and pleasant place to get around in was the major issue addressed in the second proposal for the central commercial area.

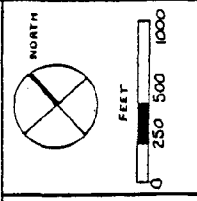
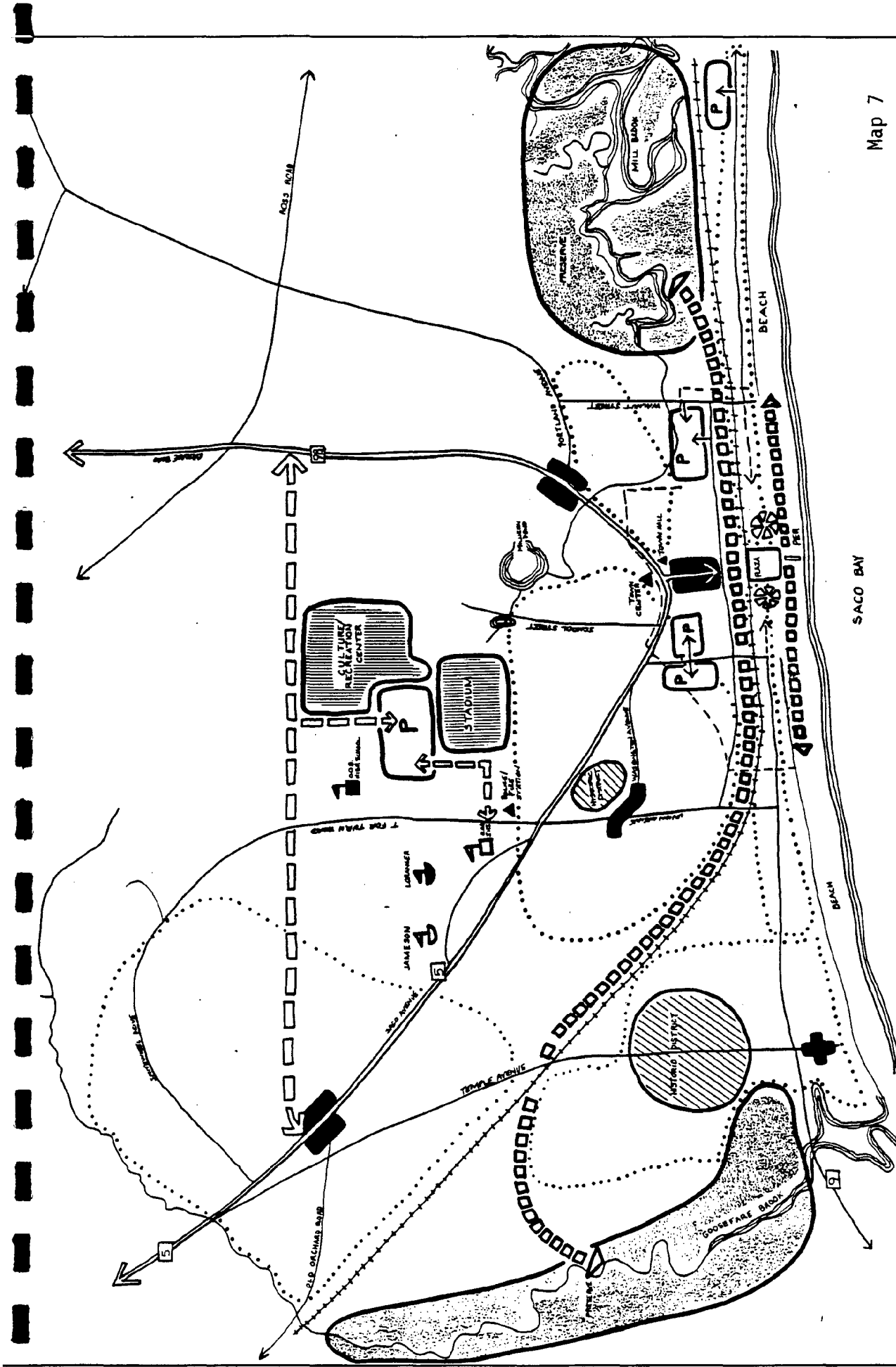
### The Concepts

The study teams proposals are illustrated in the drawings and sketches included in this section. Each specific proposal will be better understood with frequent reference to these drawings. Additionally, an illustrative site plan delineates the proposals for Old Orchard Street and the Pier area in greater detail, suggesting the design and location of key buildings, pedestrian ways, and streetscapes. Sketches have also been included to suggest the appearance of the proposed changes.

### General OOB Proposal

Map 7 illustrates the proposed concept for the town of Old Orchard Beach. This concept centers expansion of the town in areas already used for housing and commercial activity. Soil conditions limit the amount of land which can be used for housing, but it was felt that some existing neighborhoods, especially in the Portland/Cascade/Ross Roads areas, could be expanded and more intensively used. It is also suggested that existing local commercial centers be expanded and, where necessary, up-graded to meet the needs of year-round neighborhood residents. These shopping areas would be within walking distance of most of the neighborhood and, as focal points of activity, would provide for more cohesive neighborhood identities. Special signs and landscaping at the major entrances to town would also enhance the sense of arrival to OOB and help establish a more distinctive identity.

It was assumed that development of a part of the L-1 zone for a baseball stadium would take place as planned, and the study team suggests that it be the first step in establishing a combined sports and cultural/entertainment center. The building of a facility for concerts has been proposed to the town, but until it can be constructed, it may be possible to use the stadium facility for concerts in the summer. It is further recommended that a new road be constructed to channel traffic directly to the stadium - cultural/entertainment center from Route 98 to Saco Avenue in order to prevent further congestion downtown. (See Map 7). Summer traffic congestion would also be relieved by using the parking area in this center for satellite parking with free (or low cost) bus transport to the beach area. Use of the satellite parking could be further encouraged by having lower rates at the stadium than are available downtown.



- LEGEND**
- ➡ MAJOR VEHICULAR ACCESS
  - ➡ MINOR VEHICULAR ACCESS
  - PROPOSED ACCESS
  - PROPOSED ROAD
  - PEDESTRIAN ROUTE
  - P PARKING
  - COMMERCIAL
  - .... RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD
  - FOCAL POINT
  - CENTRAL AREA

# PROPOSED CONCEPT

PLANNING STUDY  
OF A  
RESORT COMMUNITY  
GEORGE WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY  
DEPT OF U-R P  
JUNE 1983

OLD  
ORCHARD  
BEACH, ME

The general proposal for Old Orchard Beach also includes provision for non-beach recreation. Specifically, it is suggested that the flood plain areas around Goosefare Brook and Jones Creek, which are managed by the State, be expanded as wild life preserves or bird sanctuaries - possibly tied in with the Rachel Carson Wildlife Refuge. With nature trails established, and through co-ordinated efforts with Saco and Scarsborough townships, still larger tracts of wetlands could be made available for use by hikers, bird watchers, and cyclists. A major pedestrian/cycling route connecting these preserves and the central area is also proposed.

Old Orchard Beach has not only district areas of historic interest, the Baptist community and the Salvation Army Camp, but also a number of other buildings of architectural interest. These could be the basis of a walking tour of the town with routes and informational pamphlets available at public buildings. Buildings or districts included in the tour could be marked with a plaque showing the town's logo, and giving the building's name, date of construction, architect, and a brief synopsis of its significance. Such a tour could also be done on a bicycle, and more bicycle paths could be created connecting downtown areas with the wildlife preserves, historic districts, satellite parking lots and residential areas. Bicycles could be made available for rent at a low cost to discourage vehicular traffic in the downtown area.

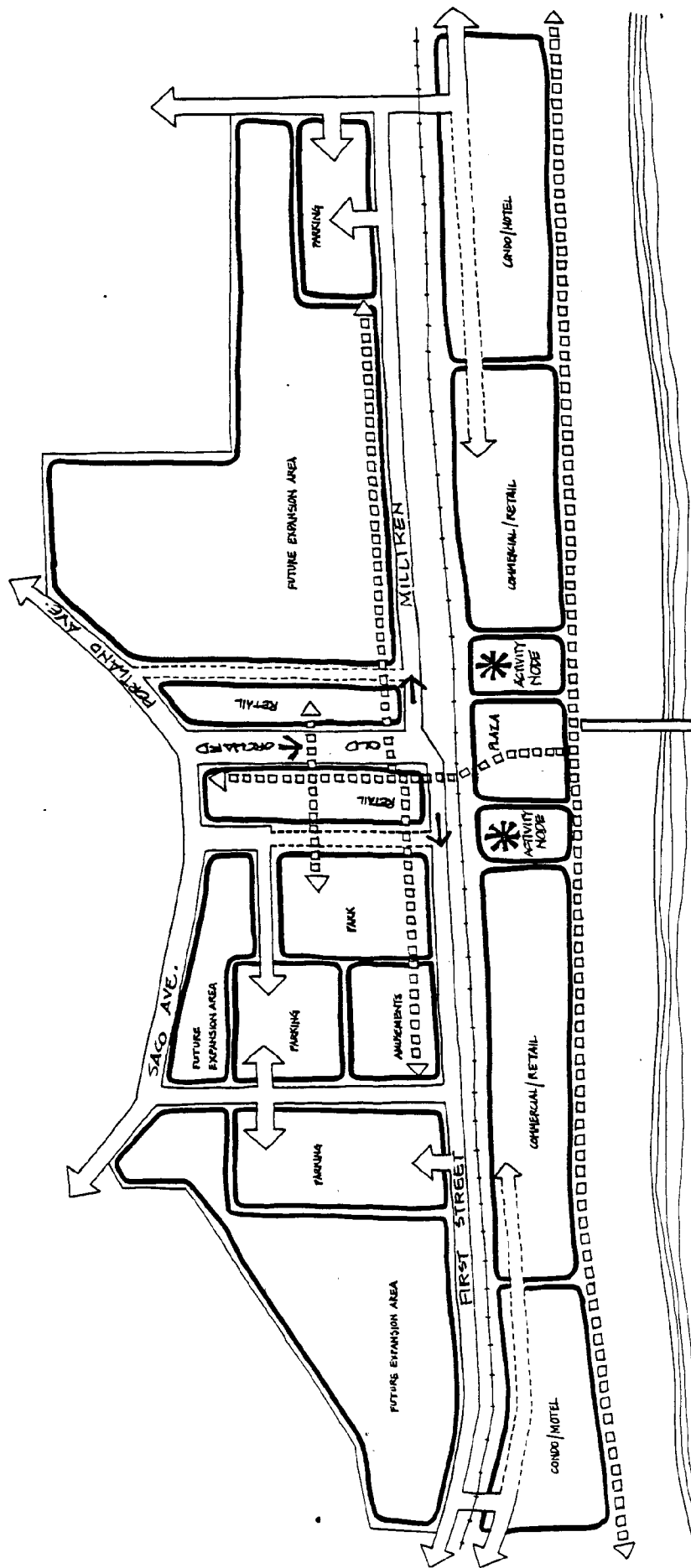
Making Old Orchard Beach a year-round vacation spot was considered as well. The weather patterns indicate that winter sports may be possible, but, because the land is very flat, recreational opportunities are somewhat limited. Ice skating is one possibility (in a rink or in areas such as Milliken pond) and cross-country skiing or snowmobiling would be possible with the marking of trails (alpine skiing is impractical as there are no sufficient slopes within the town boundaries or in this part of York County. Ice hockey facilities appear to have the most potential because the game is a popular pastime for the youth of the area.

#### Downtown Proposal

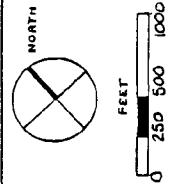
The second proposal deals only with the downtown area. While the area involved is smaller, the concept is larger in scope, calling for the relocation of some facilities, public acquisition of land, new construction, creation of a pedestrian mall and boardwalk, and rerouting of traffic.

#### Central Plaza and Boardwalk:

The key element of the proposal is the establishment of a major pedestrian plaza and related facilities at the bottom of Old Orchard Street, between the railway and the beach (See Map 8). This area is a major node of activity now, and creation of a pedestrian mall with commercial activity is seen as a catalyst for changes in the downtown area, initiated



Map 8



# PROPOSED CONCEPT: DOWNTOWN

PLANNING STUDY  
OF A  
RESORT COMMUNITY  
GEORGE WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY  
DEPT OF U-R-P  
JUNE 1983

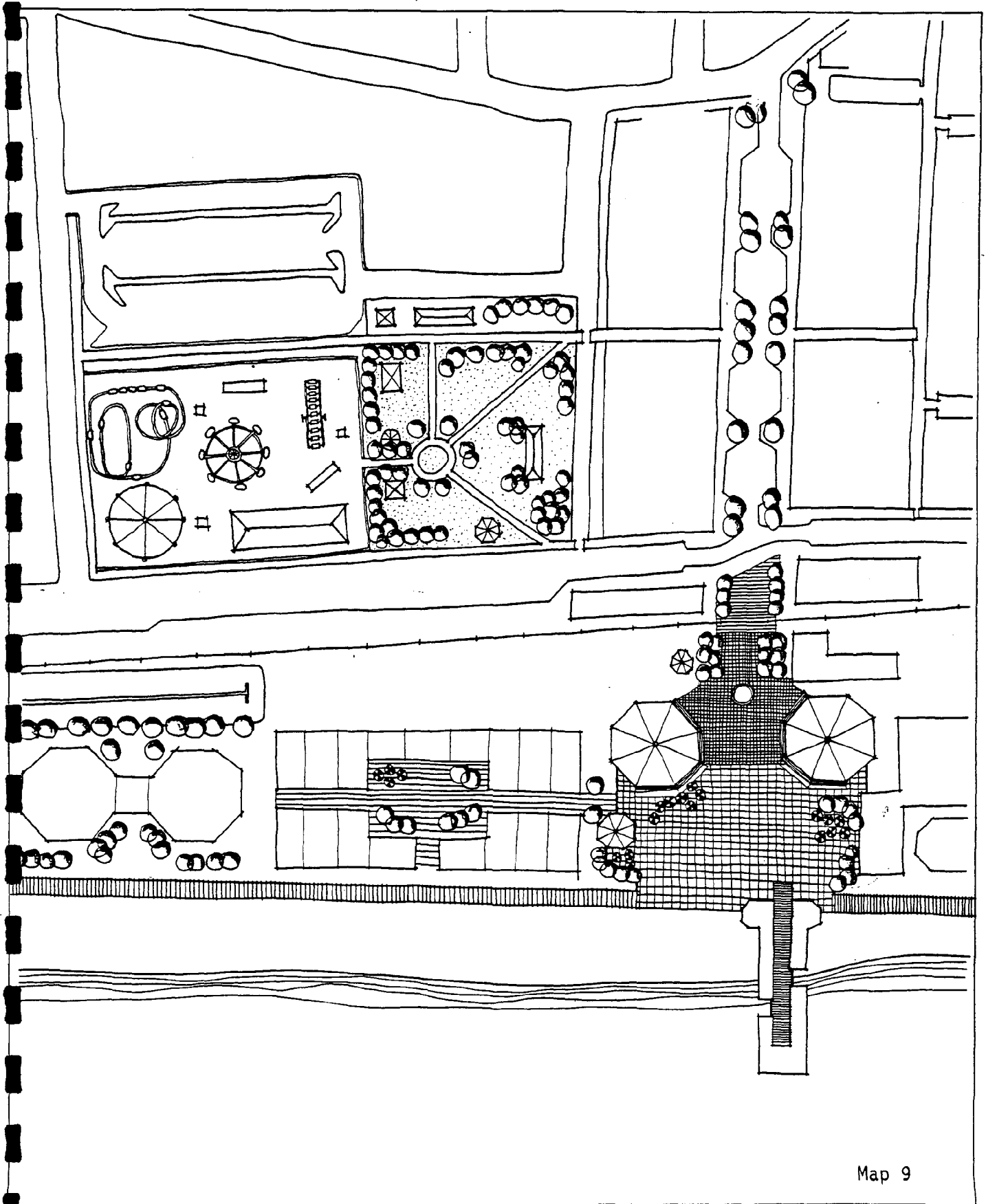
OLD  
ORCHARD  
BEACH, ME

by both the public and private sectors.

More specifically, Old Orchard Street would be closed between the railway and the waterfront. This would provide easy pedestrian access to the Pier, which traditionally is one of the major attractions of Old Orchard Beach (the swiftness with which the Pier was rebuilt following destruction of the original steel pier in 1978 attests to how important it is to the town's image). The Pier is also a source of community pride and should have an impressive approach and setting. The Carousel, which also has a long history in the town, would remain at the southern edge of the plaza (See Map 9). The approach to these attractions and the vista down Old Orchard Street would be framed by two pavilions. One might contain an indoor and outdoor restaurant and the other could serve as a bandstand or ballroom, or similar entertainment facility. These would be two stories high with cupolas and banners to complement and frame the entrance to the Pier. (See Figure 12). It is suggested that these be octagonal in shape, a form that was popular in the architecture of OOB during its heyday at the turn of the century. (This shape is still seen in the cupolas at the entrance to the Pier, at the Baptist Temple, and in OOB's octagonal house.) The mall would be the major entertainment and commercial activity center, catering primarily to the beach and tourist trade. Extending in both directions from the mall along the beach frontage, a boardwalk would provide scenic access to a variety of activities in the central area. North and south of the pavilions, privately owned shops extending from the beach to the railroad right-of-way which serve shoppers in a very special environment. With the proposed traffic flow changes, it would also be possible to create a more complete commercial/retail environment. Through partial street closings and assembly of lots, shops could also be situated around pedestrian mall areas linked to the beach and the plaza. As envisioned by the study team, the boardwalk would extend from the mall to Heath Street on the south, and Foore Street on the north. Adjacent to the proposed areas of commercial/retail development, major hotel and condominium uses would frame the central beachfront. Such uses would define the major activity center, provide a built-in clientele for the activities, and help reduce vehicular traffic in the center. Such construction would also help delineate this key portion of OOB and contribute to revitalizing the image of the town.

#### Relocation of the Amusement Park:

Creating a pedestrian plaza on the scale proposed will require relocation of some of the uses presently located at the bottom of Old Orchard Street. The study team recommends that the amusement park be relocated to land now owned by the municipality at the intersection of Heath and First Streets. The amusements would still be centrally located, but would no longer obstruct the view of the central area from the top of Old Orchard Street and the pedestrian flow and activity in the plaza. Access would be provided from the boardwalk via Heath Street, and by a pedestrian connection from Old Orchard Street. The latter route would include an approach through the park adjacent to Staples Street between First and Sunset. This park

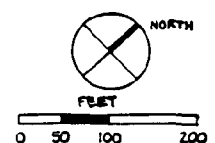


Map 9

OLD  
ORCHARD  
BEACH, ME.

PLANNING STUDY  
OF A  
RESORT COMMUNITY  
GEORGE WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY  
DEPT OF U-R-P  
JUNE 1983

ILLUSTRATIVE  
SITE PLAN





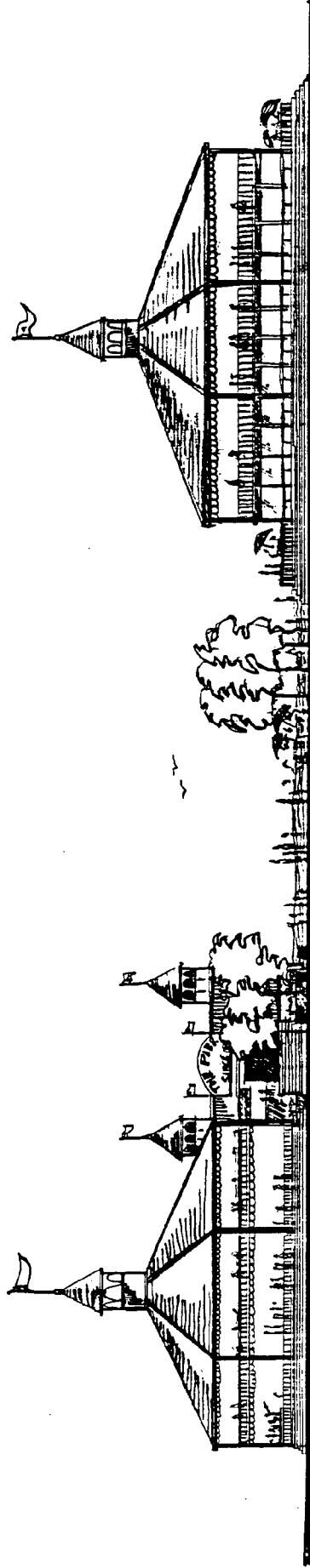


Figure 12. Elevation View: Proposed Plaza and Activity Nodes

would provide for more restful and passive recreational activity and could also provide for some municipal services, such as kiosks for tourist information, a site for special events and bicycle rentals.

#### Revitalization of Old Orchard Street:

Central to the success of the Downtown concept is the revitalization of Old Orchard Street. After investigating several possibilities, the study team concluded that Old Orchard Street should be made a one-way street, with traffic flowing toward the beach. The alternative of closing the street completely to traffic was dismissed because it was felt that the approach and view from the top of Old Orchard Street is most impressive and should be retained (See Map 8). With two way traffic, the street becomes impassable at the height of the summer season. It is proposed that traffic be channeled in two lanes down Old Orchard Street, and that parking bays be developed to allow short-term parking on the street. Between the bays, attractive seating and planting areas would effectively frame the vista and provide much needed landscaping on the street. Narrowing the street at the top of the hill (with landscaping and widened sidewalks) would inhibit through traffic and tighten the entrance to create a dramatic portal from which the ocean view would unfold. This effect would be intensified by retaining low buildings (one story) fronting Old Orchard Street, with taller buildings in the view beyond (See Figure 13).

Related proposals would involve efforts to remove non-conforming signs and to establish a coordinated signage program along Old Orchard Street. Efforts to remove the overhead wiring along the street should also be pursued. As the main approach to the central focus of the town as well as its major business center, we feel that Old Orchard Street has important significance to the image of OOB and therefore warrants such special efforts.

#### Traffic Diversion:

In order to establish pedestrian priority in the plaza area and frontage east of the railroad tracks, it is proposed that a portion of East and West Grand Avenues be closed to through traffic. From Old Orchard Street, traffic would be diverted to the right, onto First Street, or to the left onto Milliken Street. These streets would be one-way as far as Hearth and Foote Streets, respectively. In addition, Heath Street would be extended, with a new railroad track crossing, in order to facilitate both traffic circulation around the central area and beach access. Similar results would be achieved by extending Foote Street across the tracks. Francis Street and Sunset Drive would remain open to two-way traffic, providing access to Imperial and Staples streets and their commercial uses. These latter streets would not be open to through traffic from Portland Avenue to Milliken, or from Saco to First.

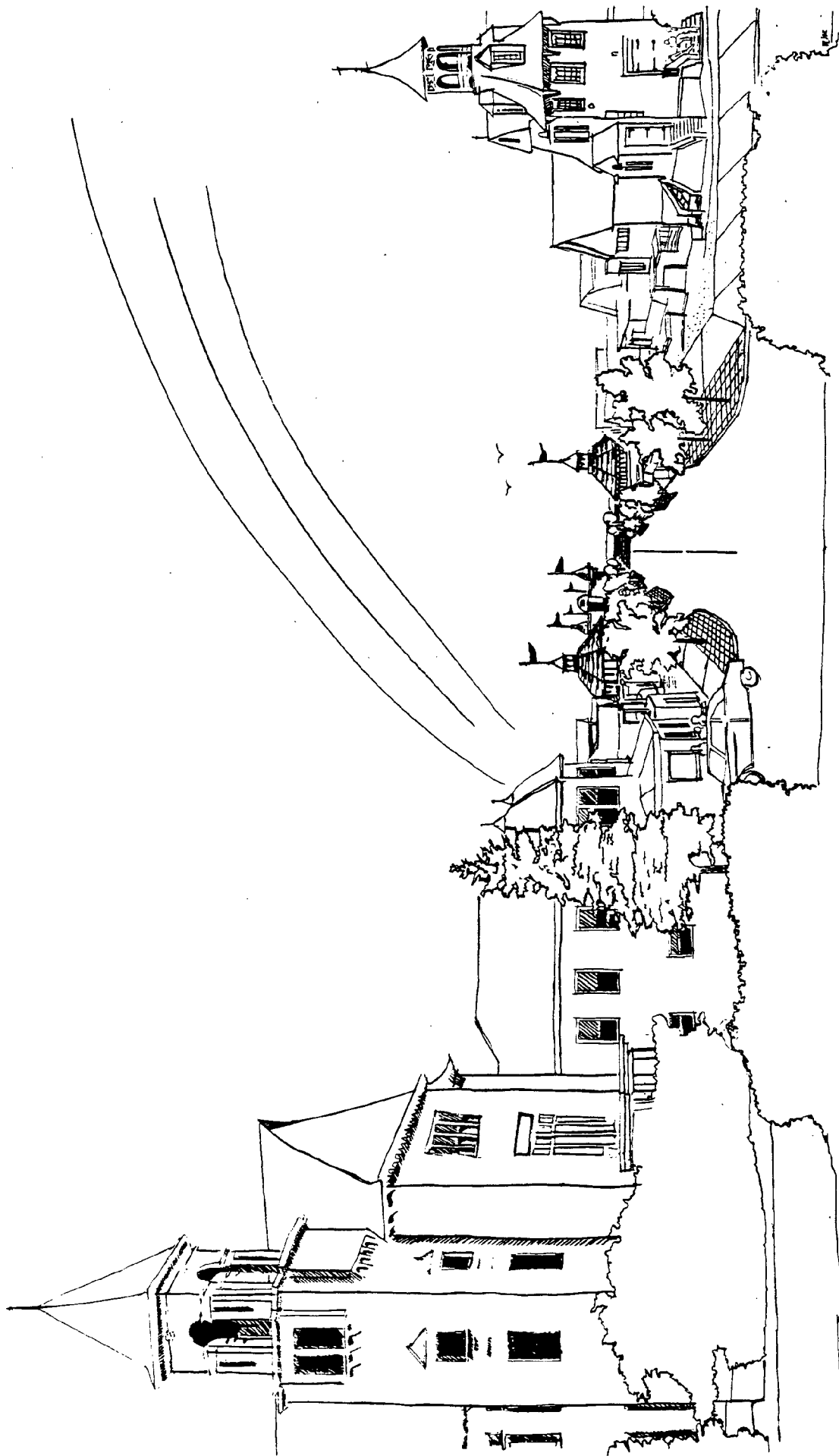


Figure 13. Proposed Treatment of Old Orchard Street:  
View From Portland Avenue

### Provision of Municipal Parking Facilities:

A municipal parking facility is proposed at the corner of Sunset and Heath Streets. A parking lot or garage at this location would serve visitors to the shops, plaza area, beach and nearby hotels. Another lot or garage could be located on the opposite side of Heath Street. A parking facility serving the other end of the mall would be located at the intersection of Foote and Milliken Streets. These parking areas and the previously noted satellite parking would all be connected by a shuttle bus which would also provide access to the recreational areas at the beach and at Mill Creek and Goosefare Brook, the baseball stadium and the cultural center.

### Pedestrian and Bicycle Trails:

It is also recommended that well developed pedestrian and bicycle linkages be established between the three main recreation areas. The existing railroad right-of-way could provide an excellent starting point for these pathways. The right-of-way could be landscaped (especially along the section through the center of town) and thus serve the dual purpose of providing such a linkage and forming an attractive linear open space. A system of pathways for cyclists and pedestrians, separate from the railway, would desirably connect the central area with the stadium, Ocean Park and other residential areas.

### Implementation

Putting these proposals into practice will require the taking of initiative by the town government through the formulation and implementation of a long-range, far-reaching program. Some of the measures recommended by the study team can be implemented immediately with little capital expenditure. These measures include:

- \*the closing of designated streets to through traffic and rearranging traffic patterns
- \*provision and promotion of non-beach recreation activities
- \*enforcement of existing ordinances

Other proposals will require more time and money to implement and require efforts from both municipal authorities and from the private sector. The key to the redevelopment scheme proposed by the team is the provision of a pedestrian area and plaza at the bottom of Old Orchard Street and extending along East and West Grand Avenues. This project, which would, of necessity, be undertaken by the town, would serve as a catalyst for more extensive changes which would require cooperative participation by both the private and public sectors. Town authorities would have to close portions of Old Orchard Street and East and West Grand Avenues to through traffic in order to create a pedestrian area between the railroad tracks

and the beach. The town would have to assemble land and develop this plaza and adjacent land to be leased for pavillions, concessions, and shops to create a major focal point in the central area. The authroities would also, in this first stage, formulate design guidelines for the renovation and redevelopment of commercial and retail use areas along Old Orchard Street and the plaza. The role of the private sector, at this point, would consist primarily of the upgrading and redevelopment of facilities to bring them into compliance with existing and proposed regulations.

The second stage would involve development of the commercial/retail areas adjacent to the central plaza, while construction of the hotel/condominium uses at Heath and Foote Streets would constitute the third stage. Initiative and capital for changing the downtown would come mainly from the private sector, with the municipality assisting in the assembling of real property and the closing of streets.

It is through such a comprehensive approach that the image and quality of Old Orchard Beach could be substantially improved. The investment of time and money by the municipal authorities should yield a large return in both quality of life and in tax revenues. The assessed value of the building stock would be increased, while the attraction of more tourists spending more money would increase the volume of taxable sales. In addition, provision of cultural activities and sports would attract visitors on a year-round basis from the surrounding communities.

Old Orchard Beach has a great deal of potential upon which to base this proposed revitalization. It has the beach, historic sites and districts, and a range of recreational activities it can develop. Most important of all, the community is increasingly concerned with determining its future growth and development. What is needed is a municipal effort to initiate and set the course for change. Once the town has indicated its intent and commitment through initial public sector plans and investment, it can expect to attract substantial private sector investmeent. What is essential now is for the town to take this initiative, to seize the opportunity to begin the process of change. Only through such decisive action do we believe that Old Orchard Beach can move forward as a thriving community, substantially improve the quality of life for all its residents, and re-establish its historic image as the Northeast's finest resort town.

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## TECHNICAL APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Current Development Projects and Economic Data
- Appendix B: The 1962 Comprehensive Plan and 1982 Amendment
- Appendix C: Overview of the Land Use Regulations and Town Government Structure
- Appendix D: Environmental Study



APPENDIX A: CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND ECONOMIC DATA

This appendix, which supplements Chapter III, presents a brief summary of current development projects in OOB. This is followed by the statistical data regarding income levels, poverty status, and employment and labor force characteristics that were used as a basis for the report's assessment of the town's economic base. Where appropriate, the figures were compared with those of York County or neighboring communities.

Data were collected from the 1980 U.S. Census, the budget reports for the town, newspaper articles, and town council minutes. Additional information was obtained through interviews with town officials, citizens, and developers.

Current Development Projects

The largest development project planned in the near future is the construction of a 7,000-seat stadium for Triple-A Baseball. The project is estimated to cost approximately \$3.5 million, with \$600,000 being used to purchase the franchise. The financial package includes \$2.2 million which is being guaranteed by the Maine Guaranty Authority (MGA). Although this is a private venture, the Town Council of Old Orchard Beach has voted to buy the stadium if the project fails. This action was considered essential in getting MGA approval. The stadium will be located on land zoned for light industrial use which is adjacent to the high school and police/fire station. The land was purchased for \$1000/acre at a total cost of approximately \$40,000.

Another large development currently underway is the conversion of the Brunswick Hotel to 26 condominium units. The total cost of the project is approximately \$2 million. Another condominium development has begun on an ocean-front site on Pearl Street. This project will include 18 units and will be financed by a loan from Portland Maine Savings. All units were sold before construction at a cost of between \$60,000 - \$65,000. Most were bought as investments, with many already unsold at an approximate price of \$70,000 - \$75,000.

FIGURE 1

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

<u>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</u>	<u>YORK COUNTY</u>		<u>OLD ORCHARD BEACH</u>	
	Number	%	Number	%
Less Than \$2,500	1625	3.3	92	3.6
\$ 2,500- 4,999	4386	8.8	343	13.5
\$ 5,000- 7,499	4236	8.5	206	8.1
\$ 7,500- 9,999	4362	8.8	283	11.1
\$10,000-12,499	4861	9.8	401	15.7
\$12,500-14,899	4643	9.4	209	8.2
\$15,000-17,499	4582	9.2	236	9.3
\$17,500-19,999	4050	8.2	174	6.8
\$20,000-22,499	4187	8.4	216	8.5
\$22,500-24,999	2974	6.0	108	4.2
\$25,000-27,499	2598	5.2	69	2.7
\$27,500-29,999	1244	3.5	69	2.7
\$30,000-34,999	2332	4.7	101	4.0
\$35,000-39,999	1129	2.3	0	.0
\$40,000-49,000	980	2.0	22	.9
\$50,000-74,999	642	1.3	11	.4
Over \$75,000	277	.6	8	.3
MEDIAN	15377		12182	
MEAN	17200		14064	

FIGURE 2  
INCOME TYPE

INCOME TYPE Count of Households	YORK COUNTY		OLD ORCHARD BEACH	
	Number	%	Number	%
Earnings	39488		1961	
Wage or Salary	37814	41	1884	40.2
Non-Farm Self Employment	5804		277	
Farm Self Employment	593		24	
Interest Dividend, Net Rental	23554	24.5	1124	23.1
Social Security	14554	15.1	791	16.2
Public Assistance	3709	3.8	258	5.3
Other	14734	15.3	742	15.2

FIGURE 3  
HOUSEHOLD INCOME

HOUSEHOLD INCOME by Income Type	YORK COUNTY	OLD ORCHARD BEACH	OLD ORCHARD BEACH As % of YORK COUNTY
Earning:			
Wage or Salary	\$16,078	\$13,310	82.7%
Non-Farm Self Employment	10,012	10,835	108.0%
Farm Self-Employment	2,680	4,806	179.0%
Interest, Dividend, Net-Rental	2,613	1,990	76.0%
Social Security	3,952	3,619	91.6%
Public Assistance	2,181	2,490	117.0%
Other	3,965	2,561	64.6%

FIGURE 4  
POVERTY STATUS

POVERTY STATUS - COUNT OF PERSONS

	<u>YORK COUNTY</u>			<u>OLD ORCHARD BEACH</u>		
	Number Above	Number Below	%	Number Above	Number Below	%
Total	122,816	13,398	9.5	5423	817	13
White	121,958	13,279	9.4	5406	810	13

FIGURE 5  
POVERTY STATUS BY AGE

<u>POVERTY STATUS BY AGE</u>	<u>YORK COUNTY</u>			<u>OLD ORCHARD BEACH</u>		
	Above	Below	%	Above	Below	%
-55 years of age	95,524	10,134	7.10	4,132	623	9.90
55-59	6,751	656	.46	308	37	.59
60-64	5,942	511	.36	272	34	.54
65+	14,593	2,097	1.50	711	123	1.90

FIGURE 6

A-6

## LABOR FORCE

<u>LABOR FORCE</u>	<u>YORK COUNTY</u>		<u>OLD ORCHARD BEACH</u>	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Armed Forces	1,254	72	13	0
Civilian Labor Force:				
Employed	34,253	25,186	1,525	1,156
Unemployed	2,083	1,596	195	110
Not in Labor Force	12,414	27,545	508	1,322

FIGURE 7

## EMPLOYMENT BY TYPE OF INDUSTRY

<u>INDUSTRY (16+)</u>	<u>YORK COUNTY</u>		<u>OLD ORCHARD BEACH</u>	
	Number	%	Number	%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Mining	1,083	1.80	13	.48
Construction	3,700	6.20	194	7.10
Manufacturing: Non Durable	8,623	14.50	364	13.30
Durable	13,650	22.96		
Transportation	1,892	3.20	84	3.10
Communications and Other				
Public Utilities	1,158	1.90	56	2.10
Wholesale Trade	1,702	2.90	121	4.40
Retail Trade	8,896	14.96		
FIRE	2,698	4.50	180	6.50
Business and Repair				
Service	1,489	2.50	33	1.20
Personal, Entertainment, Recreational Services	2,190	3.70	191	7.00
Professional and Related				
Services: Health Service	3,804	6.40	177	6.50
Educational Service	4,693	7.90	197	7.20
Other Professional	1,856	3.10	136	5.00
Public Administration	2,000	3.40	146	5.30

FIGURE 8  
CLASS OF WORKER

<u>CLASS OF WORKER</u>	<u>YORK COUNTY</u>		<u>OLD ORCHARD BEACH</u>	
	Number	%	Number	%
Private Wage Salary Worker	43,659	73.50	2,012	73.80
Federal Government Worker	5,053	8.50	131	4.80
State Government Worker	1,219	2.10	91	3.30
Local Government Worker	4,458	7.50	259	9.50
Self-Employed Worker	4,817	8.10	222	8.10
Unpaid Family Worker	233	.39	10	.37



EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

OCCUPATION	YORK COUNTY		OLD ORCHARD BEACH	
	Number	%	Number	%
Managerial and Professional Speciality Occupations:				
Executive, Administrative, Managerial Professional Speciality Occupations	4,522	7.60	205	7.50
Technical Sales and Administrative Support: Technicians and Related Support Occupations	6,380	10.70	287	10.50
Sales Occupations	1,585	2.70	79	2.90
Administrative Support Occupations Including Clerical	4,872	8.20	245	9.00
Service Occupations:	7,526	12.70	363	13.30
Private Household Occupations	318	.53	13	.47
Protective Service Occupations	708	1.20	68	2.50
Service (except above)	5,707	9.60	374	13.70
Farming, Forestry, and Fishing Occupations	1,154	1.90	12	.44
Precision Production, Craft and Repair Occupations	11,036	18.60	439	16.10
Operations, Fabricators, Laborers: Machine Operations, Assemblies and Inspectors	10,454	17.60	416	15.30
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	2,516	4.20	114	4.50
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers Laborers	2,667	4.50	110	4.00

## APPENDIX B: THE 1962 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND AMENDMENT

### Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this survey of the 1962 Comprehensive Plan was to familiarize the study team with the plan now in effect. In 1982 the plan was ostensibly unchanged. The 1982 amendment updates the plan in terms of changes in national policies, such as the end of Urban Renewal, that would make some of the 1962 proposals infeasible. For the purpose of this study, the 1962 plan was taken as a basic starting point because it established goals for the community. The goals are still valid, even if the means suggested to achieve them are no longer practical.

### Old Orchard Beach Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan now in effect for Old Orchard Beach was drawn up in 1962 by James W. Sewall Company and amended in 1982 by the Town Planning Board. Many of the ideas embodied in the original plan are still present in the Amended Plan. However, the feasibility of many of the proposals is highly questionable since the 1962 Plan relied heavily on Urban Renewal funds (no longer available) for implementation.

Major issues addressed in the 1962 Plan included poor traffic circulation, visual blight, and exploitation of the central commercial district relative to the under utilization of areas a short distance away. Solutions proposed in the 1962 plan, while no longer entirely feasible (given current government funding), still represent a kind of optional scenario for the town and are outlined in the next paragraphs.

Major features of the 1962 comprehensive plan included major rerouting of traffic and construction of new streets; redeveloping the central business district; purchase by the town of land lying between the beach and the

railroad right-of-way; and removal of the existing railway lines and routing of the trains from their present location to the old tracks of the west.

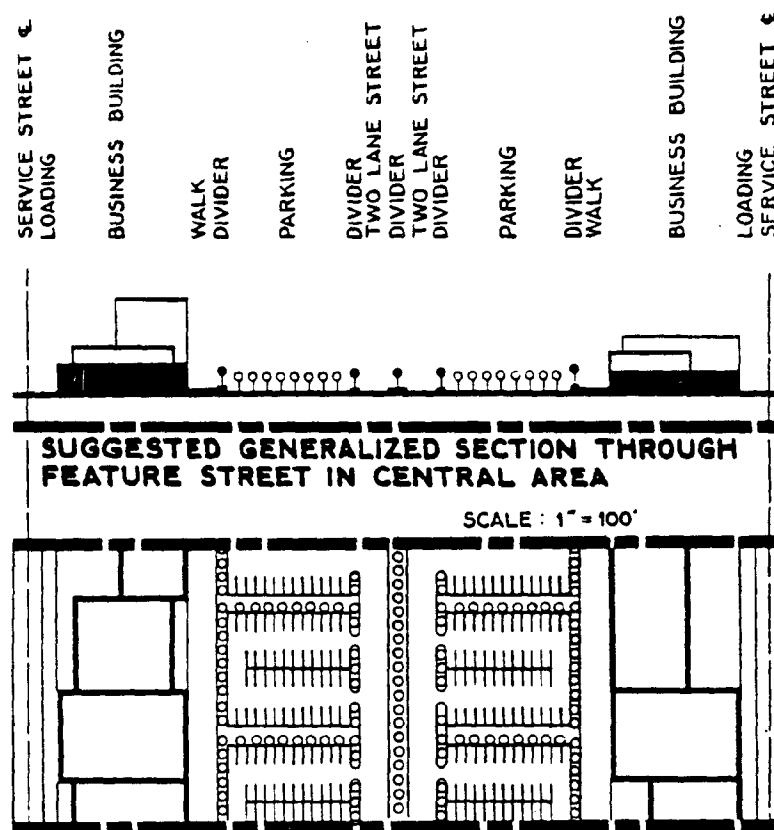
Suggestions for improving the traffic circulation system were based on five major components. These were:

1. Major thoroughfares to carry traffic to the regional highway systems.
2. Secondary thoroughfares to carry traffic from collector streets to major thoroughfares or to local center of employment and shopping.
3. Collector streets to carry traffic from minor to more important streets.
4. Residential streets are primarily for access to abutting properties.
5. Certain important roads and streets are classified "feature streets" to signify that they should be individually designed, not only to carry vehicular and pedestrian traffic, but also to perform as aesthetically appealing open spaces. A section of the proposed feature streets is given in Figure 1. The proposed thoroughfare plan is illustrated in Figure 2.

Redevelopment of the Central Business District (CBD) would have comprised a rearrangement of downtown functions in an area approximately one and one half times the present area. The opening of new areas for expansion and removal of obstacles to public access would not only provide for expansion (and more intensive use) of the CBD, but would also provide more space for a variety of uses and improved access to the beach.

As originally planned, beach front property between the beach and the railway right of way was to be developed as a series of public open spaces and recreational facilities. The plan called for acquisition of the property by the town. Funding for the purchase was to come from the Federal government as an Urban Renewal grant. This proposal was dropped in the

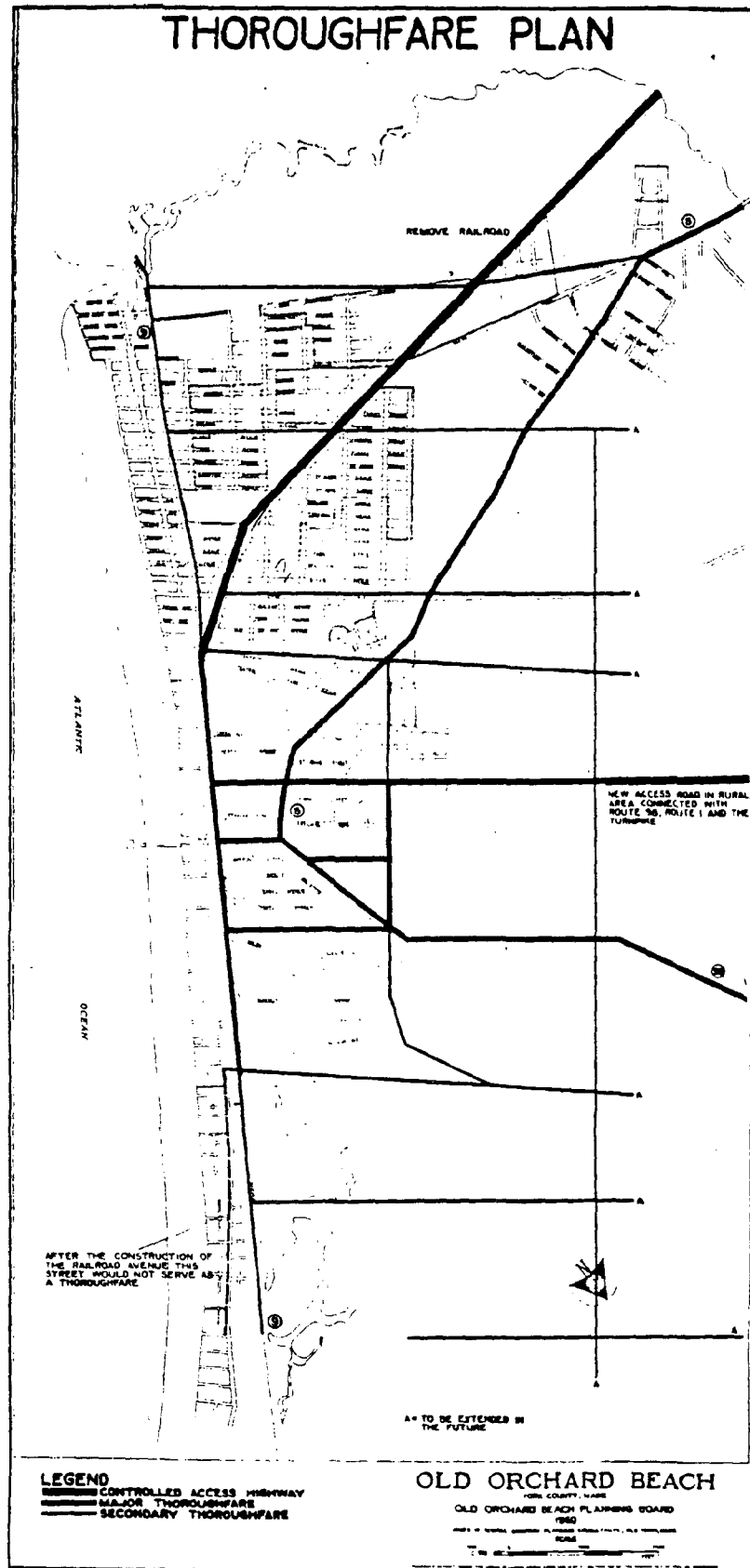
FIGURE 1



Source: The 1962 Comprehensive Plan.

FIGURE 2

B-4



Source: The 1962 Comprehensive Plan.

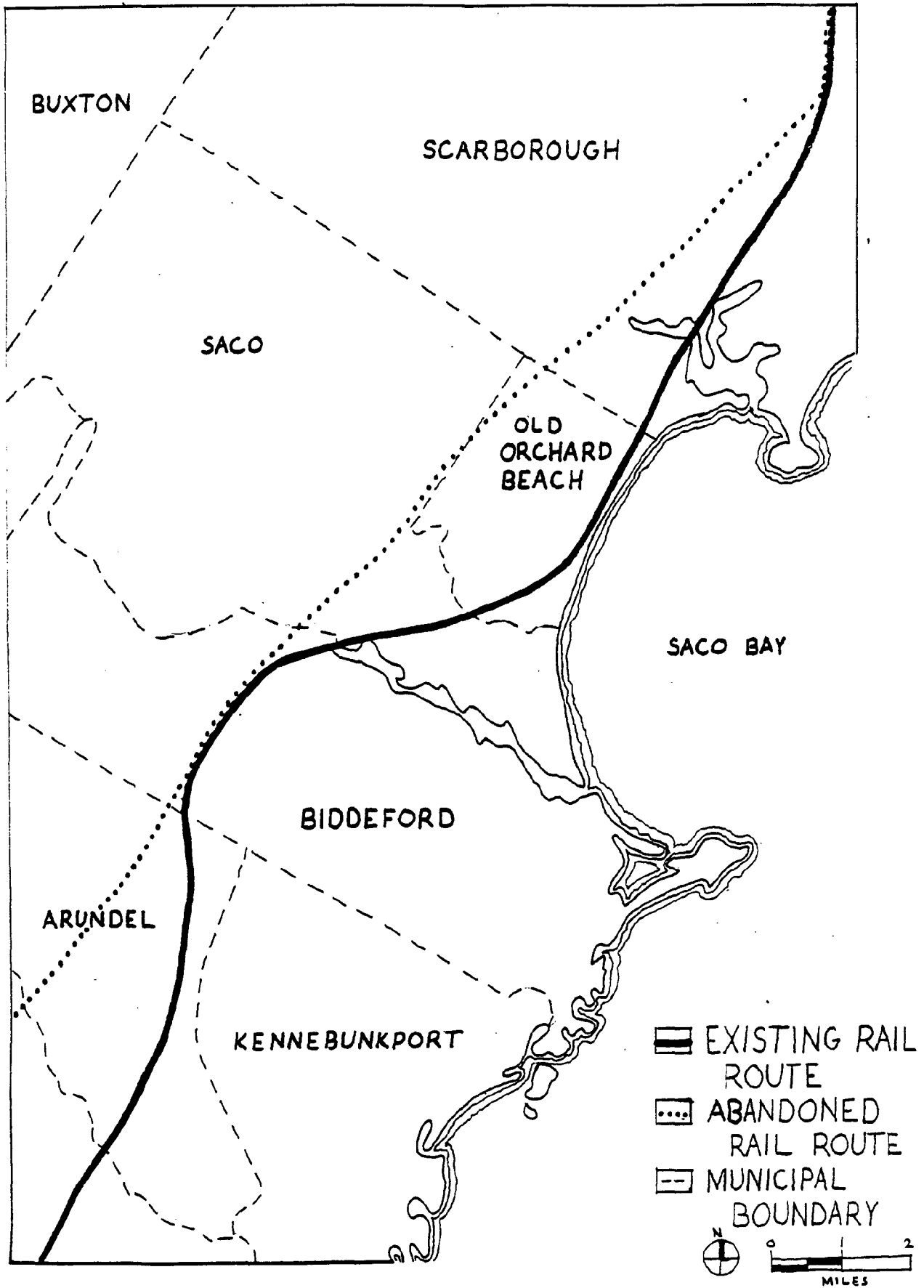
1982 Amendments, however, as the community would have taken too much valuable land off the tax roles without any real dollar return. The Amendments state, however, that the town should return all accesses to the beach which it has now and that streets and rights-of-way leading to the beach as originally proposed should be opened up for public use and should be maintained by the town to guarantee access to the beach for future generations.

Another major proposal of the 1962 plan was the relocation of the Boston and Maine Railway lines to the west. The B and M Railway then would follow an old route through eastern Saco and the northwest portion of Old Orchard Beach township. (This route is illustrated in Figure 3). Funding for implementation of this proposal was not specified; presumably, Urban Renewal Funds were to be used for the relocation as well. No mention of rerouting of the railway is made in the 1982 Amendments. Therefore, the proposal is still assumed to be valid, although there are indications that such a project is not to be undertaken anytime in the foreseeable future.

The 1962 Plan mentions the advisability of expanding the Town's tax base and providing more opportunities for employment. The creation of a light industrial zone was not suggested until the 1982 Amendment. However, city-owned land abutting the High School complex was recommended for a change from Rural to Light Industrial Zoning. This land has since been designated as an industrial park. None of the land is currently developed although plans are underway for construction of a baseball stadium. The town manager indicated in an interview that this sort of "clean" use was preferable to an industry such as a tannery.

FIGURE 3

D-0



In addition, the 1982 Amendment, recommends establishment of Shoreline Districts in order to comply with State Legislation and to protect, control and upgrade water quality in water-bodies adjacent to the districts. (Further discussion of the Shoreland Districts can be found in Appendices C and D.)

Aside from recommendations for new zoning, and changing the recommendation for acquisition of the shoreline by the town, there are few differences between the original 1962 Plan and the 1982 Amendment. Indeed, the final recommendation made by the 1982 Planning Board is that:

"A thorough review of the 1962 Plan revealed to the Planning Board the general excellence of the 20 year old document, its excellent analysis of the 1962 problems that are equally applicable to 1982, and its recommendations to guide future development. It is regrettably true that many of the proposals cannot be undertaken as proposed -- through Urban Renewal -- but they are so sound that the goal they get should always be considered as possibilities to achieve."



## APPENDIX C: OVERVIEW OF THE LAND USE REGULATIONS AND TOWN GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

### Purpose and Scope

The following overview of the OOB Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and the town government structure were undertaken as background research for Chapter IV (Existing Land Use). Such a study of land use regulations was seen as vital for an understanding of the town's planning framework. A study of the town's government makes clear the decision-making process that must be taken into account in any recommendations for future action.

Highlighted in this appendix are the key elements of the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances that pertain to the issues upon which the study team focused. For instance, the parking requirements from the Zoning Ordinance were included because of the concern for the provision of adequate parking to accommodate the tourist influx. The section on sign regulations was summarized because of the concern for improved visual quality. Parts of the Subdivision Ordinance pertaining to street and sidewalk design; road sign requirements; and the developer's obligations to provide certain basic improvements were included because of the need for improved roads and street signs.

Complete copies of the ordinances may be obtained from the OOB Town Clerk.

### The Zoning Ordinance

Old Orchard Beach first adopted a zoning ordinance in June 1965. The town adopted a comprehensive amendment to the Ordinance on March 3, 1982. The ordinance was enacted as required by Maine State Law, as "pursuant to and consistent with a comprehensive plan." (Title 30, Sec. 4962).

An analysis of the Ordinance reveals the special needs of the community and an attempt to address them through zoning. For instance, zoning was not enacted until 1965, but city land use patterns were well established long before then. When the Ordinance was adopted, many old uses and structures became non-conforming. Section 4.0 states that all buildings, structures, etc., must be in conformity as of June 1965 or become legally non-conforming. All non-conforming uses of land, structures, or uses of structures are regulated by sections 4.3.2 - 4.3.4. They stipulate that no such use or structure may be moved or enlarged except when brought into conformance with the ordinance. If a non-conforming use of land or of a structure ceases for two years or more, subsequent uses must conform. If a non-conforming structure is destroyed, it must be rebuilt within two years or thereafter conform. Any non-conforming use of a structure can be extended throughout a building manifestly designed for such a use, but no such use can be extended outside the building. Omitted uses are covered by a blanket section that specifies that any use permitted in one district and not specifically prohibited or allowed in any other district shall be considered prohibited.

In the Ordinance, town officials have addressed other critical issues through its general performance standards (Section 5.0). The parking regulations reflect the serious problem created by the large tourist influx in the summer season. The community passed stringent off-street parking requirements for all districts (Sections 5.14 - 5.15), including requirement for two off-street parking spaces for each residential unit. The signs and billboard regulations (Section

5.17) address the problem created by the proliferation of advertising signs in the CBD, especially along East and West Grand Avenues and Old Orchard Street. On these streets, the hotels, motels, restaurants, tourist homes, souvenir shops, and amusement arcades compete to attract the attention of passing tourists through the use of eye-catching signs. The Ordinance specifies standards of signs and qualifies these with public safety provisions (Section 5.17.5). Signs are explicitly forbidden that:

- \* protrude over public property (unless they are "maintained in proper condition throughout the life of the sign")
- \* have flashing lights
- \* make noise
- \* are colored or illuminated so as to obscure a clear view of traffic lights or signs
- \* obstruct clear vision in all directions
- \* are located on a roof or on the ground closer than 10 feet to a window (to prevent interference with Fire Department personnel or equipment)

The sign section of the ordinance is consistent with Maine State Law (Title 23, Section 1914), which contains the same public safety provisions. However, administration of this law is the responsibility of the local jurisdiction. The Ordinance states that "All signs in violation of this Ordinance shall be made conforming or be removed within three years from the effective date of this section." (Section 5.17.9). Since this was enacted on September 1, 1982, the three years will run out as of September 1, 1985.

Section 6.0 delineates the permitted uses and specific requirements for the residential districts (See Table 1 for space and bulk requirements by district.) The district regulations reflect the needs of a resort community in which a large number of dwellings are seasonal accommodations for tourists. Such accommodations are permitted in some residential and in all business districts. Seasonal accommodations permitted range from hotels, motels, and boarding houses to cabins and campgrounds. Trailers are allowed only in trailer parks (Section 5.15.1.1), but such parks must "conform to residential regulations which apply in the zone where they are located" (Section 5.16.2.4). Permits are required for both individual mobile homes occupancy and to construct, maintain, and operate a mobile home park (Section 5.16.2). The residential districts are (See Figure 1, Zoning Map):

Single-family residential (R-1)

For single-family detached dwellings, plus such other customary accessory and institutional uses that contribute to a wholesome neighborhood environment. Business and industrial uses are prohibited, but lodging and boarding houses are permitted.

Multi-family residential (R-2)

For two-family residences or multi-family apartments, plus customary accessory uses. Allows same uses as R-1.

Single- and Multi-family residential (R-2A)

For single- and two-family residences for which low density and ample land area is a prerequisite for these uses. Preservation of open space is a primary goal. Allows the same uses as R-1 and R-2.

Single-family residential (R-3)

For single-family residences on small lots, to preserve the "peculiar" character of a sub-community within OOB as it was established in the late 19th century. Hotels and motels are prohibited, as well as business and industrial uses.

Residential motel (R-M)

For seasonal accommodations for tourists and for year-round private residences. Allow any uses in R-2, plus hotels and motels.

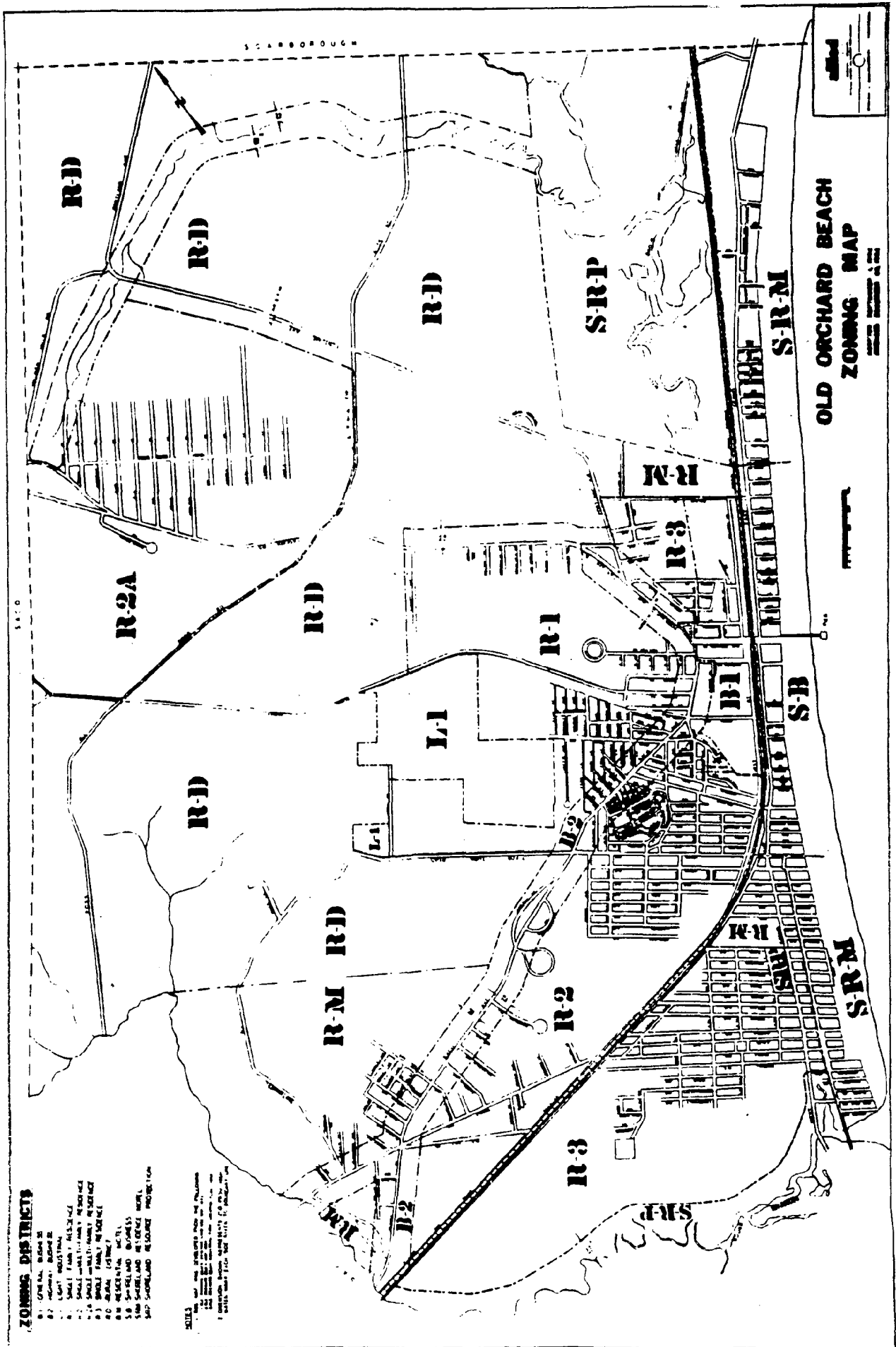
TABLE 1 SPACE AND BULK REGULATIONS BY STREET

DISTRICT	LOT AREA (minimum square footage)	LOT AREA Per Family (sq. ft.)	LOT FRONTAGE Width (feet)	FRONT YARD (ft.)	SIDE YARD Principal Building (ft.)	REAR YARD (ft.) Principal Building	BUILDING HEIGHT Maximum (ft.)	PERCENTAGE OF LOT COVERAGE
R-1	22,500	14,500	150	25	25	25	35	20
R-2	10,000	3,750	100	20	15	20	35	30
R-2A	75,000	3,750	200	100	50	50	50	20
R-3	2,500	2,500	50	10	10	10	35	35
R-M	10,000	1,000	100	15	15	20	75*	35
B-1	4,000	—	40	4	10	10	75**	—
B-2	1 acre	—	100	35	50	50	35	40
SR-P	***	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
S-B	4,000	—	40	4	10	10	75	—
S-R-M	10,000	1,000	100	15	15	20	75*	35
R-D	75,000	—	200	100	50	50	50	20
L-1	2 acres	—	100	50	50	100	50	30

\*Or 6 stories

\*\*Building Height abutting R-1, R-2, or R-3 is 35 feet; abutting R-M, height is 50 feet.

\*\*\*Shoreland Resource Protection District - no development. (Section 6.3.3.1).



Section 6.2 describes the two types of business districts in OOB, the central business district and the highway strip. (In fact, two pre-existing small neighborhood commercial areas do exist, one on Washington Avenue and the other in Ocean Park.) The Ordinance defines the districts as:

General Business (B-1)

For business (Commercial) activity "in variety". Includes any uses permitted in the R-M district.

Highway District (B-2)

For businesses requiring larger areas of land than are available in the B-1 district and where exposure to passing motorists is an asset. Extends 300 feet to either side of the center of the street. Permits all uses included in R-M.

The B-1 district (the Central Business District) differs from all other districts in that it does not have an off-street parking requirement for a part of the district. Section 6.2.1.8 states that:

"Off street parking shall not be necessary for any retail store, restaurants ... auditorium, theatre, commercial recreation facility, office, professional buildings, and public buildings, on property abutting Old Orchard Street and abutting West Grand to 4th Street and abutting East Grand to Linwood Street. All other properties in this zone shall provide parking in accordance with Section 5.14 ..."

The Ordinance includes special Shoreland Districts in conformance with Section 10 of the "State of Maine Guidelines for Municipal Shoreland Zoning Ordinances (December 15, 1973, as amended on March 25, 1979). The purpose of this section (6.3) is to further the maintenance of safe and healthful conditions; to prevent and control pollution; and to protect the natural environment of the shoreland and adjacent water. The regulations are applied to all land areas within 250 feet, horizontal distance, of the 100 year flood plain. (See Figure 1, Zoning Map).

C. 2

Shoreland Resource Protection (S-R-P):

Includes areas where development would adversely affect water quality, protective habitate, biotic systems, or scenic and natural values.

Shoreland Business (3-B):

Covers that part of the present B-1 district located between the Railroad tracks and the Beach.

Shoreland Residential Motel (S-R-M):

Residential-motel development must "preserve the scenic and environmental values of shoreland areas," as required by Title 12, Section 4811, MRSA (Mandatory Shoreland Zoning).

The September 1982 Ordinance amendment creates two other types of districts, Rural (Section 6.4) and Light Industrial (Section 6.5). These are accomodated in the large, as yet sparcely developed areas in the town-ship. (See Figure 1, Zoning Map).

Rural District (R-D):

For a variety of purposes at low density "where ample land area is an essential prerequisite." Allows all uses permitted in R-2, as well as farming, home occupations, hospitals, nursing homes, cemetarys, and golf courses.

Light Industrial (L-1):

For manufacturing, processing, treatment, research, warehousing, storage, and distribution where there is no danger of explosion or other hazards. All performance standards apply. Includes other uses such as municiple buildings and sports facilities.

Enforcement of the Ordinance is the responsibility of the Building Inspector who is appointed for an indefinite term by the municipal officers. The Building Inspector must notify the person responsible for the violation, indicating the nature of the violation, and ordering the necessary action to correct it. The Inspector is also responsible for issuing building permits or certificates of occupancy.



The five-member Board of Appeals is appointed for five-year terms, expiring successively. Two alternates serve for three-year terms. The Board hears and decides all appeals where it is alleged there is an error in any order, requirement, or decision made by the Building Inspector. The Board may affirm or reverse, in whole or in part, any decision made by the Inspector. The Board also hears variance appeals in specific cases where, owing to special conditions, the literal enforcement of the Ordinance would result in undue hardship for the property owner. The Board may not grant a variance on the basis of use or to permit a use in any district which is not permitted in that district. Also, the Board does not administer the conditional uses. These are acted upon by the Planning Board. The Zoning Board also must keep the Planning Board informed regarding appeals and decisions in order that zoning remain consistent with the comprehensive plan.

#### The Subdivision Ordinance

The Town Council adopted Subdivision Regulations on May 8, 1972. These contain standards and criteria by which the subdivision of land is to be evaluated. A subdivision, as defined by Maine State law (Title 30, Section 4956), is "The division of a tract or parcel of land into 3 or more lots ... whether accomplished by sale, lease, development, buildings or otherwise..." The ordinance is designed to assure that any proposed subdivision will:

- 1) not result in undue water or air pollution
- 2) have sufficient water supply
- 3) not cause soil erosion or adversely affect hydrology
- 4) not cause unreasonable traffic congestion
- 5) provide adequate solid waste and sewage disposal
- 6) not cause an unreasonable burden on municipal or government services

- 7) not have an adverse effect on scenic or natural beauty, historic sites, visual quality, or irreplaceable nature areas
- 8) be in conformance with an adopted subdivision regulation, comprehensive, or land use plan
- 9) be adequately financed to meet the above standards
- 10) will not adversely affect the quality of the water or the shoreline, when situated within 250 feet of a body of water.

Another section of the subdivision regulations which is of particular interest is Article 10, the Design Standards. Here streets are classified in a functional hierarchy (arterials, collectors, and minor streets). Standards for street widths, grades, intersection angles, etc., are set out in Sections 10.3.3.2 - .14 .

Article 10 also defines the subdivider's responsibilities to provide basic site improvements, such as:

- \*monuments demarking subdivision boundaries (10.1)
- \*street signs (10.2)
- \*streets (classification, layout, planting, design and construction) (10.3)
- \*sidewalks (10.4)
- \*water supply (10.5)

Required street improvements include either curbs and gutters or stabilized shoulders. Sidewalks are required "at the expense of the subdivider where the subdivision abeets or fronts onto a major street, and at such locations as the Board may deem necessary." (Section 10.4.1). A water supply system (or individual wells) with fire hydrants must be installed at the expense of the subdivider. Street signs also must be furnished and installed by the subdivider. Planting strips along streets

must receive a base of loam, be fertilized, and be planted with trees as required by the Planning Board.

The Subdivision Ordinance, as a whole, contains the procedures to be followed by developers. It specifies requirements for review and approval of minor subdivision, for preliminary and final plans for major subdivision. The Ordinance also outlines enforcement procedures and the role of the Planning Board in regard to its administration.

#### The Town Government

Old Orchard Beach has a Town Council - Town Manager form of government. The Council is made up of five members who are elected for staggered three-year terms. They in turn, appoint the Town Manager who serves for an indefinite term. According to the Town Charter, the Manager is also the Tax Collector, Road Commissioner, and Overseer of the Poor. The Council also appoints the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning Board, as well as a number of key officials, such as:

- \*Municipal Planner/Builder Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer
- \*Tax Assessor
- \*Treasurer
- \*Secretary to the Town Manager
- \*License/Electrical/Plumbing Inspectors
- \*Housing Authority
- \*Community Development Block Grant Director
- \*Citizen's UDAG Committee
- \*Biddeford/Saco/OOB Transit Advisory Commission
- \*School District Superintendant and Trustees

Town government, elected officials include:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Number of members</u>	<u>Term</u>
Town Council	5	3 years, staggered
Town Clerk	1	1 year
Public Safety Commissioners	3	3 years
Park Commission	3	3 years
Constables	2	1 year
School Board	5	3 years

Because the Town is small, many people serve in several capacities at one time, as evidenced by the multiple responsibilities of the Town Manager and Municipal Planner. Other members of the community who may not currently hold a position, but have done so in the past, are often experts on certain aspects of community life. As a result, there is a wealth of resources to be tapped for information on the community's past and present.

## APPENDIX D: ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY

### Purpose and Scope

The intent of this report is to examine and analyze the existing ecological conditions and natural resources in the Old Orchard Beach (OOB) area. The primary focus is upon the beach area, as it is OOB's strongest magnet and its most important economic and aesthetic resource.

### Methodology

Several area studies were analyzed in addition to the local zoning ordinance, Maine State Law, and local newspaper articles. Personal interviews were conducted with local and regional planning officials.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEY

### Topography

Old Orchard Beach is located on the southwestern Maine coast 12 miles south of Portland. The town is characterized by gently rolling hills, dense woodlands, meandering streams, tidal marshes, and an eastern shoreline of predominantly fine sandy beaches. The highest elevation is about 138 feet above sea level just south of Milliken Mills. Slopes average 4-5 percent.

### Climate

The climate is generally cool and humid, being moderated by the Atlantic Ocean. Yearly temperatures average 45 degrees. OOB experiences approximately 43 inches of rain and 70 inches of snow annually. The growing season has approximately 170 frost-free days between May and September.

### Geology

According to the 1975 Critical Area Treatment Study of Old Orchard Beach, the 00B area, as part of the coastal lowlands, is dominated by large outwash plains and areas of marine and lacustrine silt and clay sediments, deposited over glacial till. The marine deposits are located in areas such as Mill Brook, where erosion has worn away the sand cover. The bedrock geology is composed of intensely folded and metamorphosed volcanic rocks, phyllite, shist and quartzite. Throughout the area are projections of the underlying glacial till soils, forming rounded hills and ridges. This till, modified by erosion, has provided the base material for modern-day soils. Geologic deposits of economic value are sand and gravel.

### Soil

Each soil type possesses a number of characteristics that cause it to be reasonably well suited for some uses and poorly suited for other uses. It is important that new development or land uses take place on soils that are reasonably well suited for that purpose. The predominant soil of 00B is sandy loam of various types. This creates development limitations of varying degrees which can be reasonably determined by consulting the 1972 Interim Soil Survey Report for Old Orchard Beach.

### Forestland

Forestland provides a major contribution to the environment by supplying cover for water production, wildlife, shrub and plant life, and recreation, in addition to enhancing an area's visual quality.

Old Orchard Beach enjoys many densely wooded areas, particularly around Temple Avenue in Ocean Park, the high school, Smithwheel Road, and a large area surrounding Ross Road and Portland Avenue. The primary tree growth in the study area is White and Red Pine, Aspen and Birch.

#### Wetlands

Old Orchard Beach enjoys both fresh and saltwater marshes, which account for 537 acres or 14% of the entire OOB area. The most predominant is the tidal marsh containing Little River and Mill Brook, and to the south, Goosefare Brook. The peninsula - like nature of Ocean Park has been masked in recent times by the extensive filling in of the marshes behind the beach, with the remaining wetlands representing only a small fraction of the original marsh.<sup>1</sup> These two areas, and the small marsh to the west of West Grand between Casco and Tunis Avenue (357 acres) are protected under Title 38 of the Maine State Law Sec. 472 which regulates the alteration of wetlands. This law provides much needed control over the use of coastal wetlands which provide a primary source of nutrient for over 60% of the marine species in the area.<sup>2</sup>

The wetland areas are managed by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Game, and are also protected from development by local resource protection zoning. The zoning boundaries protect only part of the 100 year floodplain, which has resulted in flooding problems for many residents, particularly in Ocean Park.

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<sup>1</sup>A Study of Beach Processes and Management Alternatives for Saco Bay. Augusta, Me.: 1975.

<sup>2</sup>Threshold to Maine: Resource Conservation and Development Plan. Augusta, Me: 1970.

### Wildlife

The wildlife of the area is an integral part of the area's ecology. The wide range of habitat provide for an enormous variety of animal life. Although the total wildlife resources of the area are limited, OOB has fourteen species of shorebirds and waterfowl which use the dunes, sandy beaches and marshes. Eight known species of gulls and terns also rest and feed in the dune areas. During winter periods, OOB is the home of several species of hawks, in addition to bald eagles and snowy owls. No endangered species are known to utilize the area.

Ocean Park, from Goosefare Book up to the railroad and down to Tunis Avenue, is classified as a bird sanctuary in which the hunting of both birds and game is prohibited. Establishment of this sanctuary has been a major step in acknowledging the significance of safeguarding the environment. The wildlife of an area is not only a necessary part of the total natural environment, it is also responsible for attracting permanent residents, as well as summer residents and visitors.

### The Beach

The study area encompasses a strip of shorefront containing approximately 65 acres of sand beach and 20 acres of dunes. The dune is about 5,800 feet in length and averages 180 feet in width.<sup>3</sup> The dunes extend along the back edge of the beach, creating a barrier to protect the inland areas from storm waves.

The beach is the primary attraction to OOB. In 1975 the average daily use of the beach in the summer was estimated to be 20,000 during

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<sup>3</sup>U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil, Conservation Service. Threshold to Maine: Old Orchard Critical Area Treatment Resource Conservation and Development Plan. Augusta, Me.: 1970.



the week and up to 100,000 people on weekends and holidays. This amounts to approximately 1,800,000 user days per year.<sup>4</sup> This heavy usage, if not properly managed, can have a severe impact upon normal beach processes. As the major asset of OOB, the beach's condition is crucial to the economic and aesthetic welfare of the community.

The Saco Bay Study has divided the OOB area into 3 distinct beaches: Ocean Park, OOB, and Grand Beach.

#### Ocean Park

Ocean Park runs from Goosefare Brook to Tunis Avenue. According to the survey, the area from Milliken street to Tunis has seen some dramatic changes in the last 50 years. Evidence indicates that dunes in this area have grown in height and are continuing to do so. Despite the efforts of several studies, the source of sand appears to remain a mystery.

#### Old Orchard Beach

Old Orchard Beach extends from Tunis Avenue to the former Old Orchard Beach Pier. According to the survey, large amounts of sand have accumulated in this beach system as well. The influx of sand has been considered a nuisance. Not only does it blow over in lawns, fences, walls and city streets, but it reduces the amount of beach available for tourists. Consequently, the dunes have been bulldozed away to widen the beach to accommodate more tourists.

Moving this unwanted sand has had its costs. The winter of '78 caused

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid. p.2.

damage to beachfront structures not protected by sand dunes. This section of the beach does not suffer from an erosion problem but from a washover problem. The function of the dune is to meet the attack of storm waves and to hopefully break their impact. Otherwise, the increased height of the ocean allows water to wash right over the beach and attack beachfront property. Despite the increased amounts of sand, it is not where it is needed to provide protection from major storms.

The storm of '78 provided an incentive for the town's dune establishment and management efforts. In 1979, OOB initiated a dune grass planting and rebuilding program which included putting up snow fencing and boardwalk crossings to protect the fragile grass. Apparently these efforts have helped prevent any further damage, though continued maintenance is crucial to its continued success. Over the long term, this section of the beach has remained amazingly stable and the dunes have been relatively effective in preventing large scale losses of beachfront property during storms.

#### Grand Beach

This beach extends from the pier area to the Scarborough line. It runs in a northeast-southwest direction which makes it nearly parallel to both prevailing summer breezes and winter storm winds, while northwest winter winds blow almost directly offshore. This lack of onshore wind means the process of dune building is slow, despite ample amounts of sand in the neighboring area.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid

In 1938 a severe storm provided the incentive for many seawalls to be built in an effort to prevent further erosion of the existing dunes in this section of the beach. The dunes however, did not get a chance to rebuild before the walls were built. The seawalls have not, in and of themselves, been considered effective in defending the shoreline, as storm waves break far enough off shore to dissipate much of their energy before striking any seawall. Moreover, sand which accumulates in front of the seawall acts as a barrier as it must first be removed before the waves can attack the wall. Severe storms can still cause damage however, since none of the area is very high above sea level and the dunes, due to the wind patterns, have been low. Fortunately, the seaward edge of existing dunes are often even with the seawall line, and it is determined that dune grass is able to grow in front of the existing seawalls. Thus, the dunes have an opportunity to grow.<sup>6</sup>

If present conditions are allowed to continue, coarser orange sand from the Old Orchard area will probably change the character of the beach by piling more sand in front of the seawalls and steepening the beach slope. This is expected to take a considerable amount of time, however, as the prevailing winds are working against each other.

#### The Comprehensive Plan

The 1982 Amendments to OOB's Comprehensive Plan included a program to stabilize the dunes by planting and protecting dune grass. The objective was to protect inland areas from occasional storm waves, and

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid. p. 24.

to reduce the wind deposition of sand on the adjacent public streets and blowing sand considered a nuisance factor to the private and commercial properties abutting the beach.

#### Shoreland Zoning and Subdivision Control

Maine's Shoreland Zoning and Subdivision Control Act requires that shoreland areas (defined as land within 250 feet of the normal high water mark of any pond, river or salt water body) be subjected to zoning and subdivision controls. The purpose of these controls, as stated, "shall be to ... further the maintenance of safe and healthful conditions; prevent and control water pollution; protect spawning grounds, fish aquatic life, bird and other wildlife habitat; control building sites, placement of structures and land uses; and conserve shore cover."

The following includes the key criteria which must be considered before approval is granted for a proposed subdivision: the elevation of land above sea level and its relation to the floodplains, the nature of the soils and their ability to adequately support waste disposal and the slope of the land and its effect on effluents.

In compliance with state legislation, shoreland zoning districts have been established as of December, 1982. (see Appendix C). According to Jerry Plante, OOB's Town Manager, they have been approved by the State Board of Environmental Protection and the Land Use Regulatory Commission. These districts are subject to state standards, though shoreland zoning provision remove state-imposed shoreland zoning regulations.

#### Alterations of Rivers, Streams, and Brooks

Title 12 87776 requires that a permit be obtained "before one

dredges, fills, or erects a causeway, bridge, marina, wharf, dock or other permanent structure, on or adjacent to any river, stream or brook in such a manner that the dredged soil, fill, or structure may fall or be washed into the water." It must first be demonstrated that the proposed activity will not interfere with recreational uses or navigational uses. It may not cause unreasonable soil erosion, unreasonably interfere with the natural flow of water, harm wildlife habitat, or lower the quality of water.

Laws and regulations protecting the physical environment have been a positive step toward realizing the significance of natural resources. However, laws and regulations must be fairly and stringently enforced if they are to be effective in presenting the natural inheritance of the community.

#### Noise

As this element is not a visible part of the physical environment, its effects are often overlooked. OOB has recently (as of March 16, 1983) adopted an enforceable and legally defensible noise ordinance. Such an ordinance is of importance when considering the potential for conflicting land uses and activities in such a tourist community. Discos, restaurants with live or recorded music, traffic, barking dogs and amusements can all create disturbances to nearby motels, guest houses or private residences. The decibel system currently enforced by the police department was based upon recommendations provided by the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission. The system allows for more noise during the day than at night, and allows for more noise in industrial and commercial districts than in residential districts.

## ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OOB has made several attempts at cleaning up its environment. A memorandum from Jerry Plante, Town Manager, mentions recent improvements, including a new secondary waste water treatment facility; an ongoing sludge composting plant for soil enrichment nutrients; an active dune grass management program; raking of the beach; and the process of separating storm sewers from sanitary sewers. Despite this effort, many environmental problems still exist. Some can and should be permanently corrected; others will require continued monitoring and management to keep them under control.

### Water Quality

#### Waste Treatment

Although OOB has begun separating its storm waters runoff from its sanitary sewer system, the process has continued at a very slow pace, forcing the sewer system to work over its capacity. As such, the system becomes ineffective during the periods of heavy rainfall. It should also be recognized that the discharge of untreated storm water from the urban area of town into the ocean will also have some adverse effect on water quality.

Goosefare Brook receives effluent from the Old Orchard Treatment Plant and as such is a major source of pollution. In the report "Survey of Waste Discharges to Shellfishing Areas" (1974), it was shown that the beach area, north and south of the Saco River's mouth has in the past become contaminated due to the apparent inadequacy of the treatment plant. Consequently, shellfishing from Goosefare Brook to the pier is prohibited, though periodically the ban is lifted.

### Drainage/Flooding

A study to control stormwater runoff in Ocean Park was undertaken in September 1982.<sup>7</sup> The area is subject to frequent flooding as a result of heavy rainfall which has worsened in recent years. The inadequate drainage system results in the accumulation of sediment and debris, and an associated odor problem. The tide gates, obstructed drains, debris-filled catch basins and continued development in the contributing watershed were suggested as possible reasons for the flooding problems. In addition, the topography of Ocean Park is flat, and the existing primary drainage system, according to the report, is in need of maintenance and repair. The study summarized the findings of the engineering analysis and addressed possible drainage system improvements, but these have yet to be considered by OOB.

### The Dump

The composition of the soil, in tandem with a high water table (prevalent in OOB), pose development limitations for the dump site, ranging from slight to severe, depending on the nature of the use. The dump is situated upon soils determined unsuitable for that use. Windsor loamy sand, Augres loamy sand, and Deerfield loamy sand all are classified as having severe limitations for this use due to rapid permeability and a high water table. Ground water contamination has been discovered. As a result, the town has planned to close the dump as of July 1983. According to Ben Emery, tax assessor, an older dump west of Walnut has also begun to pollute the natural drainage area thru Mill Brook.

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<sup>7</sup>Town of Old Orchard Beach, Maine. Ocean Park Storm Drainage Study. September, 1982. E.C. Jordan Co., Portland, Maine.

It cannot be stressed enough how important it is for new development or land uses to take place on soils well-suited for that use. According to the "Interim Soil Survey Report," when land is used for purposes for which it is poorly suited, the following conditions may exist:

- \* development and construction costs will be higher
- \* annual maintenance costs will be higher
- \* ground and surface water pollution will occur and higher taxes will probably result
- \* health hazards will result, and
- \* the quality of the natural environment will be downgraded.

#### Sand Blowing and Sand Loss

These problems occur when wind velocities exceed 11 miles per hour, a common occurrence in this area. The eroding sand is deposited on public streets and private property, adding significantly to annual maintenance costs. The current rate of sand loss due to wind erosion is estimated to be around 10 tons per acre per year, but this figure (120 tons lost per year) was arrived at when 60% of the natural vegetation had been lost. There are no current figures of sand loss, but it is not considered a major problem.

#### Dune Grass

According to the Saco Bay Beach Study, the last 25 years have seen the beaches subjected to vast increases in the number of summer visitors. As a consequence, the dunes have been subjected to abuse. As a result, the dune grass is forced back and cannot grow seaward to its natural limit. Sand entering the system is still blown onshore, but moves landward until it reaches the existing dune grass. Since the edge of the dune grass is determined by human pressures rather than by natural forces, the sand is piled higher rather than being distributed horizontally.



Recently planted dune grass is not expected to perform miracles, but area residents are willing to put the time and energy necessary into revitalizing and maintaining their dunes. This is one of the most essential elements for successful beach management. Neglect of the dunes, coupled with severe summer population pressures, could lead to the continual retreat of the dunes and the advance of the ocean towards developed areas. Large amounts of loose sand would be pushed into private and commercial properties and the erosive effects of storms would be increased.

Probably the most important issue to be dealt with is the conflict between ecological needs of the beach and the economic needs of the town. The town needs to attract tourists and residents. As the beach is the main focus and magnet, it is essential that it be protected from abuse. A healthy dune system will keep sand on the beach where it is needed, and minimize the amount of sand blown into the streets where it is a nuisance.

Old Orchard Beach's environmental problems are reversable. The water can be cleaned up, the flooding corrected, the dunes maintained. With proper management, OOB can continue to be an environmentally healthy and attractive community.

